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SIGHTS AND INSIGHTS:

PATIENCE STRONG'S STORY OF OVER THE WAY.

BY

Edeline Sullivan Frame

MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE OTHER GIRLS," "WE GIRLS," "REAL FOLKS,"
"LESLIE GOLDTHWAITE," ETC.

VOL. I.



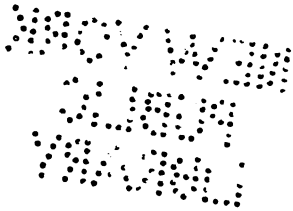
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POSTSCRIPT

TO BE PUT AT THE BEGINNING.

1st Gravedigger. It may be all well enough — for a story ; but nevertheless it has no business to be. And you see she knows it all the time, with her reasonings and her apologies. What right had she to scribble it all off, in short hand, to Rose Halliday — whoever that is ?

2d Gravedigger. Why, Rose Halliday is an *alter ego*. Can't a woman talk to herself, if she has no privilege elsewhere ?

1st Gravedigger. But here it is in a book. And the world has got it ; at least, as much of the world as will pay any attention. And it has all just happened ; a couple of years ago.

2d Gravedigger, solemnly. My dear, do you properly apprehend what a book is ? It is an utterly impersonal, abstract irresponsibility. It is a mere medium ; a battery of type plates, which you hold by its two covers, to receive a magnetic current. And the little black characters upon which you fix your eyes are hypnotizers. The book tells you nothing. You simply perceive. The places, persons, occurrences, are or have been, and you come into intuitive relations with them.

1st Gravedigger. I can't see it in quite such a boneless light. It is a thing deliberately done ; written, printed, published.

2d Gravedigger. Well ; even so, the book and the story had to be.

1st Gravedigger. " I do not of that see the necessity."

2d Gravedigger. And possibly — as might have been retorted to the original sarcasm, — there may not be a like vital necessity that you should. — We've had it, anyway ; and we've done with it. Put it up on the shelf ; we will begin the new one ; it has been out three days already.

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SIGHTS AND INSIGHTS.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT THE BEGINNING.

PATIENCE STRONG TO ROSE HALLIDAY.

OLD FARM, 12th June, 187-.

. . . . My first introduction to her, — I do not mean the naming of our names by a third person ; that never happened at all, and it was more than nine months afterward that we found each other out by name ; — but my first introduction to her — and it takes a good many, first and last, before you come to *knowledge* — was in the little east parlor of the Giant's Cairn House at Outledge, where I had been staying five weeks, and where she had just arrived.

It was early in the morning. I was going to take the 6.30 train down to Boston. There are cars between Boston and Outledge, now, all the way, and we all inveigh against them and take them, just as we do other new things that supersede the old, though we may all say the old is better.

Mrs. Regis had come by the evening express the night before, and had had tea in her room at ten o'clock. I had heard an arrival, and a great dragging of big trunks past my door in the long wing ; but I had never thought of it again until I came into the little parlor, ten minutes before the whistle, to pick up my bag and shawl, that I had laid there when I went to breakfast, and saw this picture before the fire. I took a negative of it, half unconsciously, which I found developing after I got through my little hurries, and was safely off in a big arm-chair

in the Pullman car, with my parcels all put up, and my novel in my lap waiting till I was tired of other things, and wanted it; which case I have never yet come to in a railway journey, though the novel is always there.

A railway ride is such a good chance to read things that are not printed.

That little picture of Mrs. Regis, which I took off without her knowledge or my own, at the moment, came out so very clear before me; it seemed to tell me a whole story. Afterward, I came to know something of how much my first impression might be worth; I have yet a great deal, I dare say, if we go on to get acquainted, both to verify and to rectify. It is funny what a mixture of surprising facts and mistaken conclusions these first impressions often turn out to be. But I always take care of that first negative. It is a key; if you don't turn the lock the wrong way with it.

She was so very handsome, to begin with; sitting there alone in the one large, deep-cushioned rocking-chair before the fire, that crackled with its first clean morning brightness; her feet, pretty and trim, though not so very small, set comfortably, in a ladylike way, on the low fender. And *she* was so fresh and comfortable. I described her just now, — as we often describe, and credit to minor details, that which gives the mood and color to our general apprehension, — when I spoke about the fire. Crackling with the first clean morning brightness. That was what she was, and what I have noticed her always since to be. There came an electric perception of freshness all over, with just looking at her. She gave a sensation of how nice it was to be just up, and bathed, and dressed. As Mrs. Gradgrind, or a more cheerful person, might have said, there was a face in the room pink and smooth with good rest, and cold water, and the pleasantness of a morning blaze, and you did n't know whether it was somebody's else or yours. Really, looking at her, it did n't seem to make much difference, the sense of it was so keen.

It was in face, and hair, and dress, and all; in such perfect unruffled adjustment; out to the tips of her fingers, that with two or three splendid rings upon them, touched each other in a

sort of delight of delicate quiet, as she leaned them together, her elbows resting upon the chair-arms ; and down to the slipper-rim that framed the plump instep in its fine white stocking.

I am not beginning a novel, Rose ; at least, I don't believe I am ; though I have fallen into such a story-like kind of description. You asked me about her, and how it came to pass, so I want you to begin where I did, and see her as I saw her at the first. She and I are going to be a good deal to each other, in one way or another, for a little time to come ; and it does seem, just to look at her and me, rather queer that it has happened.

She had a widow's cap on, which was so absolutely untouched in its freshness that it was a wonder how it had ever got made up, or set upon her head. I almost 'spected, as I reviewed it deliberately in my mental negative, that it must have grown. Three little cloudy puffs framed exactly the clear forehead, and cheeks, and the hair so glossy, and so carefully arranged, though so perfectly simple. There was a little glitter, just at the edges, where it was brushed back ; but it was more like a fine illuminated line than like gray hairs ; and she had not a wrinkle in her face, though I knew somehow, without the outward betrayal, that she had doubtless lived years enough for gray hairs and wrinkles to be quite possible. Something in the way the lips, quite faultless in their shape, lay together, so easy, satisfied, undisturbed, — and in the full, calm eyelids, corresponding, made me think that she would never *let* her mouth sadden heavily into lines, or her eyes cry themselves dim, or into shrunken settings. Perhaps she never forgot herself long enough. She finished herself up too scrupulously every day, to drop into any decay that must partly come from not caring.

Death had come close to her ; her cap said that. Death, or the separations of life, almost as terrible, must have come, I imagined, more than once ; for she had the air of one with little present responsibility, and few, if any, close ties. The very way in which she sat there, expressed the freedom, the independence, and inoccupation of a woman whose duties, and whose deep interests, had ceased to press upon her.

I only tell you just what I fancied *then*, mind ; but it seemed to me as if she had comfortably got through her tribulations, and

laid them away in graves, or seen her burdens happily shunted off on side tracks of circumstance; and that since nothing *great* could very well happen to her any more, she could set herself placidly to receive that which remained to her, and which apparently was plentiful and agreeable enough, in nice and leisurely detail. I thought she was content to put on that widow's cap, of unhandled creation, in the calm certainty that she need encounter nothing now, in daily wear, to rumple it. It is a sort of thing to be adopted only when the day's work of life is done; and it seems, sometimes, to say so.

I don't half like the look of it, now I have written it down; it is n't the way I *mean* to judge people, or in which I thought I did. I don't think I should let myself be governed by such judgment, and I don't believe it would exactly come to me in the ordinary course of things; but I seemed just passively to read it out that morning from the picture, as I should have read a railway advertisement in which I had really no practical interest, only that it was placed before my eyes when I had nothing else to do. I wonder if some things—not evil judgments, Rose, but some things, of after use—may n't be set before us in these passive times, mentally and spiritually, by the children of light, as these same cunning printed suggestions are put for us by the children of this world, so wise in their generation? There is a parallel, as there is in every mortal way and device; and wisdom is justified of *all* her children.

To confess it all in a few direct words, I thought that woman sitting in the one comfortable chair, in the middle of the room, taking up all the pleasantness of it, was a very selfish woman, who had slipped with smooth self-caring through all the discipline of living, so that it had left no mark; who had never questioned with herself, at any crisis, whether *she* had done all her duty, or possibly failed fatally of something; who, with her durable beauty, had played the successive parts of life serenely and becomingly,—in the superficial sense; not really *becoming* anything; who had “appeared well” in all relations; took up each as quite timely and suitable in its order; found it as natural and graceful to be a widow, as to have been a wife; and was settled down, now, to an undisturbed solitary enjoying of what to a more real person might be desolation.

I looked at her, in that inward photograph, until I caught myself almost hating her clear, rosy face, her straight, impassible, handsome nose, her young, unworn expression, her dainty dress, her white cap. And then the train stopped at a way-station; a party of three or four persons got in and wanted chairs, which were not all to be had, and were finally settled by the bland, gentlemanly-voiced, gold-banded conductor, in a compartment; a boy came in with magnificent Bartlett pears, and I bought some; we whistled and steamed away again, and came down into a lovely piece of country, where the maples were shining in the morning sun with their early gold and vermillion, and I forgot all about the calm and comely widow, and never thought any more of her until, nine months and more later, — in June, — I met her again at Outledge, and had my second introduction.

And now we sail, together, the week after next, in the *Nova Zembla*, for Liverpool.

But that does not come next. And what does come next must go into another letter. I shall write more than one, I dare say, before I go. My packing is nearly done, — house-packing, I mean; making room for “Eliphalet’s folks” to come to the old farm for the summer. I always say *that* because mother did. The dear old mother-ways, that some people hurry to get rid of, never will be helped die out by me. There was heart in them; and how shall our “hearts live forever,” if we cut away all the little live cords of habit and memory that they pulsate by?

CHAPTER II.

CORNER BISCUITS.

.
. . . . It was the spring after Emery Ann's mother died, and little Rhodory was seventeen, and had got well on with her schooling, and, in fact, had studied too hard, and Matilda, Pen-uel's wife, wrote to ask if she could n't have her for a while; for her health was poor, and the children "needed a sight of looking after, and *he* was n't to say nigh as smart as he had been;" so we went down a journey among the Maine hills and lakes, and left Rhodory at Shenean, and came back,—Emery Ann and I,—by Gorham, and Mount Washington, and Outledge.

It was early in the season when we got to the Giant's Cairn House, and the crowd had not come up. But there were twenty or thirty people in the hotel, and the early families, for the long season, had begun to settle in the little boarding-houses.

I did not know a soul among the hotel visitors, and of course Emery Ann did n't; but they seemed nearly all to know each other; so it was two or three days before we really made any talk with any of them. But the very first person I saw the first morning we got there, was the handsome widow lady whom I had not thought of for nearly ten months, and who flashed right back into her place and history in my imagination, when I found her in exactly the same spot again, before the fire,—for the early June mornings were chilly,—in the same little east parlor, on to which all the fine new suite of drawing-rooms was tacked, in the great enlarging of Giant's Cairn House, after the railroad came.

She knew the cosiest place, just like a cat; and she sat there, with just the same rosy morning face, and unfingered cap, and fine white stockings, and trim slippers, with her feet on the fender. Mrs. Henson's great gray cat was there too; which made me think of the likeness; and Mrs. Regis had made room for her at the edge of her skirts, and looked down at her now and then with an amiable and sympathetic expression. I was going to say a *feelin* one, but I don't make puns except by accident.

"The lady does not 'belong to the kick-the-cat-and-poke-the-fire society,' as I heard a man say once that some crusty person did," I said to myself, touching up the little character sketch begun the year before. "The cat must be comfortable, too. It is a part of her comfort."

She made room for me also; *just* room; she evidently could n't have peace in her mind by actually crowding anybody out; but I did not care to sit on the edge of her skirts like old Benjamin, so I only bowed, and moved away to a window where I found a sunny seat, and waited there for Emery Ann.

We had just done breakfast. We were always pretty punctual; so, as there were plenty of late comers, the little morning parlor had not begun to fill, as it would presently, with people waiting about in that brief, delicious procrastination which precedes the "beginning upon the day."

When it did, and a little circle gathered around the fire and Mrs. Regis, she found places very politely till there was no more room to make, but did not give up, out and out, *her* place to anybody. A pleasant little talk began, which she joined in, and indeed led, for a few minutes; then she said, rather suddenly, that she could n't be comfortable any longer, for she had a trunk to unpack, and clothes to give out for the wash, and the woman would be waiting.

"Oh, let her wait a little while!" cried a young girl, who leaned on her chair behind, and who seemed to have — as girls will have — an extreme admiration for the fascinating elder woman.

"There would n't be any satisfaction in that, Katie!" and Mrs. Regis rose, left the fire, and the rocking-chair, and bet

knot of satellites, and went up, with that same smooth content upon her face, into the cold.

Later in the day, the ladies were gathered in the end piazza, while some of the younger ones played croquet upon the green. Emery Ann and I had work and a book, and had settled ourselves, since dinner, on a small settee nearer the front corner of the house. But we were still quite near enough to the others to see and hear all that went on, in both little plays that were proceeding. For it does n't need a plot and set scenes, or even an interest that is ever to be completed, to make a play. Every chance group and conversation is a scene, and everybody — but Shakespeare said that, as he said most things, long ago.

There were settees, and regular piazza chairs, — stiff enough, of plain deal, with no cushions, — and there were one or two comfortable low Shaker chairs, and a couple of stuffed rockers. Mrs. Regis, of course, was established in one of the last, and all the rest were occupied. A lady much older than herself, with white hair and slow step, came out to join the party. Mrs. Regis rose instantly. But, then, so did Katie, and Katie's mother, and two or three other persons. The white-haired lady accepted a young girl's seat with very gentle thanks, and Mrs. Regis settled again into her own.

"I wonder why they make uncomfortable chairs, at all!" said Mrs. Regis. "If I had the ordering, there should n't be anything manufactured that was n't low and broad and easy. Such things as those, standing round, are only just so many compulsions to the continual giving up of the few one could really rest in. Nobody can take entire comfort."

"Except those that 'd *rather* not rob themselves of the givin' up," said Emery Ann; to me, I suppose, for she certainly had no business to speak to Mrs. Regis. But she looked at nobody at all; her eyes were straight before her, over the tops of her knitting-needles, and her voice was clear and loud.

There was that instant's silence which occurs in a well-bred company when somebody jumps over a social fence into the midst of things, — the same pause of surprise that might come in talk if a cat bounced in at a window; then everybody recognizes that it is only a cat, and the talk goes on.

"Yes," said Mrs. Regis, as if without interruption, "I would never have anything but easy-chairs."

"And corner biscuits," said a tall, beautiful young woman, whom I had noticed from the beginning, but whose name — except "Margaret" — and whose exact connection in the party I had not yet found out. She had been among them all day, but without directly attaching herself to any one. "She had some little pans made," she went on, "to hold four breakfast biscuits, because she thinks a biscuit is good for nothing without a corner."

Mrs. Regis smiled, as quite willing that her providing for everybody to have the best should be made known.

The girl's speech, and the personal pronoun in it, puzzled me. Did she belong to Mrs. Regis? Then why did n't she say "Aunt," or, if it were possible to be so, "Mamma"? If she were a friend, and had been entertained at Mrs. Regis's table, why would it not have been more elegant — and so, for that girl, more natural — to speak of her by her name?

But I laid that aside in my mind, and went on thinking. Somehow this handsome, comfortable woman *would* keep explaining herself to me.

I said to myself, "There are people who may be prompt and energetic just because they are naturally lazy, and want to make room for laziness, not leaving any little pricks of annoyance from things undone; and persons who may be, in all foresights and decisions, generous, — perhaps at great, single points, magnanimous, — because they are at once proud and self-respecting, and at the same time conscious that their little practical tendencies are selfish. It is n't a hopeless thing with such a person, after all. The working, in a long time, might be to redeem one's self without knowing it."

Two days after, I had been writing a letter to Gertrude, Eliphalet's wife. She thought some of coming up here with Edith, and I had been finding out about rooms for her.

I had written my letter in the east parlor; and after I had shut up my little lap blotting-book, and stuck my pen in the inkstand, and snapped the inkstand cover, I sat looking dreamily out of the window, over toward Giant's Cairn, sharp and beautiful against the morning blue.

Mrs. Regis sat a little way off at the next window. She had her hat on, waiting for some girls who were going with her to the Cathedral Woods.

I bethought myself suddenly of a pattern I had said I would look for in my trunk for Emery Ann, and that she might be wanting it; and I gathered up pen, cup, stand, book, and moved quickly across the room to the door.

"Your letter, madam," said Mrs. Regis's voice behind me; and I turned, and saw my letter, which had lain in my lap, in her hand. As I looked up at her face, and held out my hand, thanking her, I caught the surprise in her expression, as she saw, naturally and unavoidably enough, the address.

"I beg your pardon! 'Mrs. Eliphalet Strong?' Is she a friend of yours?" And then "I beg your pardon!" for the second involuntary liberty of the question, was repeated. Mrs. Regis had certainly the instincts of a lady.

"She is my sister-in-law," I answered.

"She is also my cousin; that is, my step-cousin. I believe I'm a step-everything to somebody or another. My step-mother was her aunt. May I ask if you expect her here?"

"I think so," I replied. "I am writing to her about rooms."

"I shall be glad to see her. I have not met Gertrude for many years. I was at Fort Snelling with Colonel Regis a long time before the war; and then when he went South with the army, I came to Louisville. I have never been quite East until last summer."

We exchanged a few more words, and then Katie and Margaret and the others came in. But my acquaintance — as people call acquaintance — with Mrs. Regis was begun. The real little introductions though, that I had got beforehand, and the things that gradually, in like manner, added themselves afterward were quite ahead, for a long time, of our actual intercourse. Perhaps they are likely to be so still.

Now that I was "Miss Strong," Mrs. Regis was very cordial indeed. She even extended a suavity that ignored all peculiarity to "Miss Tudor." That is not a common name, you know, and she was evidently rather impressed by it. But have you any idea or remembrance of who "Miss Tudor" is?

Why, it is Emery Ann!

Her mother was married twice; little Rhodory is Rhodory Breckenshaw; but Emery Ann is Tudor, — when you go off and back to that, which we hardly ever think of at home in any way.

It is very well, I think, that I began with my voluminous “letters of introduction” three weeks beforehand. I had no notion I should be so gossippy. But you asked me for my “sights and insights,” and I find they began away back, two summers ago. You are to start with me, Rose, and go all the way; and you know what my “outings” are; “into the middles,” and “into other people’s business;” an old maid’s mission, as I always claim; only some old maids are so apt to half comprehend and half do their errands, and pick at the edges of everything instead of getting into the heart of any — the nearest. There is no middle, but mere meddle, in that; and they degrade, when they might magnify, their office.

CHAPTER III.

STEP-EVERYTHING.

.
 If it were not for these long pen and ink talks with you, Rose, I really should not quite know what to do with the last days. Everything is getting so terribly ready; and the house is so cleared up, and packed up, and Emery Ann and I have so much ado not to do anything; not to *live* — the sort of living that gets things about again, and not to wear, toward the end, what by any means will want washing and ironing again — for us. We are to roll up the *very* last in a bundle on the Monday evening, and little Tim Callahan is to come and carry it away, — as he has all the other odds and ends, — for his mother.

But to return to Outledge, and finish up — if I can — my Preface.

Gertrude and Edith came up the next week. Gertrude told me a good deal about her "step-cousin." They had exchanged long visits when they were girls, though Gertrude was considerably the younger, and they had gone to parties, for a whole winter together, in Washington. Then Virginia married Colonel Regis, and went to Florida, and afterward up to Fort Snelling, and they had lost sight and thread of each other.

Virginia was Colonel Regis's second wife; his "step-wife," as bright, saucy, willful little Margaret had actually called her, once.

Mrs. Regis had told me, herself, that she had had a step-mother. Had there been no real, close, first-hand relationship for her anywhere? Was she, as she said, "step-everything?"

I thought of my own dear little mother ; I turned to her in that little sanctuary of my thought where a light of presence is always hovering, and I could hardly, any more, judge or blame the woman who had had nothing like that.

Her father had died, Gertrude told me, when she was only five years old, two years after his second marriage ; and when she was ten her step-mother had married again. Five years later, she went away with her husband to China, leaving Virginia at Philadelphia with her sister, also, of course, Gertrude's aunt. The husband of this lady was a member of Congress, and for a time in the Cabinet. Thus the girls' companionship at Washington.

But what fearful fourth-dilutions of heart's love and belonging ! Colonel Regis had been killed at Fort Donelson ; they had never had a child.

No ; she never *had* stood at any dear death-bed. That supreme, holy experience had not been given her. Perhaps she had never been ready for it, with the love that would make it supreme and holy. It might be that only her own would touch her to the real deep. There seemed little else — of that kind — to happen to her now. I do not think I wonder much that she wore her delicate caps, with their white rolls, only as a careful framing to her handsome face, and that she moved with a mere elegant satisfaction in the *rôle* that was assigned to her at the last. Step-everything ! A walking lady for the personation of tremendous actualities.

Margaret was the younger, by many years, of Colonel Regis's two daughters. Helen had been at boarding-school when her father died, and had been married, during the last winter but one, at twenty-five ; just before Margaret, in her turn, finally came home and out into society.

There was a curious, and I think very blameworthy arrangement about property, as concerned these two young women. Mrs. Regis received absolutely, some say, and some say upon condition of making no second marriage, the bulk of her husband's wealth, the income of which was to be taxed with an annual personal allowance for each of the two daughters, to be replaced at their several marriages, with a portion outright.

A certain additional part of the large remainder was to revert, at the widow's death, to either or to both of the children, according to her direction and in such shares as she should please; but that amount could not be devised entirely away from both. The still considerable residue — unless it were for the disputed condition mentioned — was wholly in her own power and disposing. If either sister married without her step-mother's consent before the age of twenty-five, she should forfeit her portion and all future inheritance. Gertrude had heard of all this at the time; it had made a good deal of talk naturally.

It came hard upon this proud, handsome Margaret. *She* had all her youth and its contingencies to live through, under the very watch and ward that *might* be so tyrannous, so selfish. Helen had escaped easily. There could have been no reasonable exception taken to her alliance with Maurice Vanderhuysen, a man at thirty-three in high public station and esteem, of unblemished record, of old New York family, and substantial wealth. Even if she had not been in her twenty-fifth summer when she met him, and chosen, naturally enough, the coming birthday in December, for her marriage.

Margaret was just eighteen at this time, — a year ago, you know, — when I met her and her step-mother at Outledge.

It was really very odd, — if anything ever is, which you know I don't believe, — that we all came together there and then, and that all this, and the dear Lord knoweth how much more, began to grow out of it.

Gertrude thinks very well — very much, indeed — of Mrs. Regis. One never imagines easily that a girl one has chatted and dressed and slept and gone to merry-makings with, in the old times, can have turned out hard, or grasping, or managing, in the after-moulding of the world. Gertrude says that Virginia had been quite a devoted wife to Colonel Regis, who would have her with him everywhere, and who was very exacting in daily life.

Undoubtedly, she thinks, she will do all that is right by Margaret, as she has done by Helen. Colonel Regis would not have left it so, if he had not known that he could fully trust her

with his children. She is the sort of woman who will feel she owes it to her own self-respect to fulfill her duties.

Yes, I could see that even then. She must have a comfortable opinion of herself. She would pay certain taxes, unhesitatingly, out of pleasures and preferences, — perhaps even interests, — to gather all back again in that form. That sort of self-sacrifice carried a neutralizing quality against real wear and tear; it had kept her calm and plump. I do not think, any the more, however, that she is a woman — yet — to give herself *all* away. And the will, I think, was even wickedly unwise. I had no patience with it, as I heard about it. I would not put between real, dear, own motherhood and daughterhood such an ungracious, mistrustful power and dependence as that. Besides, it seems to me that such a will, in its presumption of the need for so much watch and ward and authority, reflects upon a man's own estimate of himself, and of his first dead wife; since character and trustworthiness must surely descend by a law far more innate and unerring than any statute which can be made for the control of money-inheritance.

We liked Margaret Regis, ever so much, Emery Ann and I.

You know how, especially since we have been quite left to each other, the good house friend and I have grown more and more to be thorough companions; and that everywhere, though she is my great help and reliance, I refuse to let that make her, in any painful, obvious way, my inferior, any more than she is made at home; any more than my little mother made her. It was the old-fashioned New England relation between us, always. It was, of course, convenient, and in the right order, when we were all together, a family, for Emery Ann to serve and to come last; but with mother and me, and then with me alone, it settled down, more and more, to make no difference. I surely could not take her traveling with me, now, as my "maid," and send her into hotel kitchens! No; though she spoke tenfold vernacular, and wore five brown satin braids on the top of her head, instead of one, which I can't yet gently persuade her out of!

So she is my friend and companion, and people find it out and admit it. I find it is only the unusual things of this sort that you *propose* to do, or half do, that you are eyebrowed out of,

nobody stares or expostulates when you have once and for all quietly established your little exception.

Margaret Regis used to come into our rooms a good deal. Emery Ann sat mostly in her own little bedchamber that led out from mine, with the door open between us. And that just expresses how we live together.

Margaret was too proud and dignified to tell any one, least of all a recent acquaintance, the things that vexed or made her cold and jealous and uncomfortable in her relations with her step-mother; but she was the most undisguised reserved person I ever saw. She never said, It is so and so, between mamma and me; but she uttered her energetic, uncompromising opinions of life, of books, of histories, of whatever you spoke about, showing the color of her own experience, and betraying most simply how she had come at her feeling through circumstance, until you felt almost as if you had listened in a corner or peeped into a folded writing, so thoroughly you understood that which was unsaid.

She was an odd little thing, and she made you think of her so, for all her tall superbness of beauty, and her proud individuality. She had as many freaks as a kitten, but they were springs and bounds of a strength and quickness that were akin to the leonine — the grand.

She would almost always make an errand from my room into Emery Ann's, and linger there, getting into talk with the quaint, honest soul, whose quaintness and honesty were her wonderful charm to the high-bred girl whose own originalities and sincerities often tempted her to cast aside the little conventionalities of her class polish and training, in outright and graphic speech.

"I always did hate to be moralized to," she said one day. "If I see a thing, I don't want it poked at me as if I could n't; and if I don't what's the use until I do? Do you know, Miss Tudor, what I said the first time they took me to church, when I was four years old? It was up in the country, in Connecticut, and some old lady aunts I was staying with dressed me up and let me go to meeting. When I got home, they asked me questions to find out what my small impressions had been. I would n't admit a sensation, because I saw that it was expected.

'Oh, I saw the people,' I answered, carelessly. 'Well, where were they?' 'Oh, in little pens!' 'In pens?' 'Yes, with little doors; shut in like pigs.' 'What a child! But what else did you see?' 'Oh, I saw a man, looking over the fence, making up faces at 'em, and hollering!' That was what I used to amuse myself with doing, in the farmyard; and it was what the preaching really seemed like to me. It seems like that, sometimes, to this day, especially amateur preaching."

Who could not guess that Mrs. Regis had been giving long, excellent, world-wise, and heavenly-moral advice, and, perhaps, expostulation, that morning?

She was fond of giving *us* sensations by these queer little anecdotes of her childhood, though she scarcely ever spoke of herself as she was now.

"Do let me be obliging!" she cried one day, when she had brought a footstool to Emery Ann, who had a cutting-board with cloth and patterns on her lap, and was keeping it level by balancing on her tiptoes. "I like it better now, than when it used to be required of me. People expect such perfect crucifixion of self from little children, and the total-depravity people require the most. I remember when some one gave me a reason, once, for being perfectly willing always to leave my dolls and run up-stairs for her eye-glasses, which were always somewhere else. 'Little girls should be obliging. They are obliged for everything, you know. They couldn't get, or make, the least thing they need for themselves. The least they can do is to run little errands cheerfully.' It was perfectly true; that was the very reason that it stayed in my mind all day, and that I rushed up to Cousin Arthur when he came in at night, and asked him with absolute fierceness 'what I could do to earn five dollars.' 'What do *you* want with five dollars?' he asked, with exasperating grown-upness. 'I want to earn five dollars, *somehow*,' I said, in furious earnest, 'and live a disobliging life!' Once in a while, I think I should like to do it now."

Her voice dropped into a kind of pathetic quietness.

"That girl is harrered out of her life," said Emery Ann to me when she had gone.

"No, I don't think that," said I. "Because, in the first place, nobody ever is harrowed *out* of their life; it's for the life's sake the ground is harrowed; and then I don't think Mrs. Regis will ever really treat her badly."

"It's wuss sometimes when people don't," said Emery Ann, sententiously.

One morning, when Mrs. Regis, Gertrude, Margaret, Edith, and I were all together, a talk came up about going to Europe. And that was the beginning — though we did not think much of it then — of all the talks that have come since, and of the way that it has happened round.

A family — parents and young people — had arrived at the hotel, who had just returned from a year's travel. The girls, of course, were all alight about it; except that I could see that Margaret caught herself up in the midst of some enthusiasm, every now and then, and calmed suddenly down.

We went over ways and means, and comparative expenses, as people do; at least Gertrude and Mrs. Regis talked it all over, and Edith chimed in eagerly whenever some special delightful thing was mentioned that one could do so easily on the other side the water.

"I wish it were possible for me to go again now, for Edith's sake," said Gertrude. "She was such a baby when we went before."

"Oh, mamma, I was seven, you know, — just old enough for me to remember why I long to go again. I think it is nice to have been when you were a child; you have that dear feeling of old places, besides the beauty of what you did n't see. I want so to get back into those lovely old Boboli gardens!"

Mrs. Regis turned to her step-daughter with an air as if some mental suggestion had put weight and purpose into the accidental talk.

"Would you like to go to Europe, Margaret?"

The girl's face kindled. She could not help that, at the first idea. But she looked up at Mrs. Regis, with that grave, proud expression coming into her eyes, and said, —

"Of course, mamma, I should like it. But it would not be of any use."

The last words were very deliberate and firm. It was quite uncomfortable; it was so evident that they meant something beyond the saying.

Mrs. Regis looked slightly impatient. She turned away again, to Gertrude.

"Did you tell me it was in Dresden, or in Munich you bought that beautiful copy of Holbein's Infant Christ and the Sick Child?" she said. And then led the talk round to the last collection exhibited at the Athenæum, and from that to somebody she met there; and then to an approaching wedding in town, and so back, by way of people who were going home to it, to Outledge and the present moment.

Mrs. Regis not only knew how to change a conversation, but to keep it changed. Not even Edith's second girlish return to the charge, could bring up the subject of foreign affairs again.

Of course Gertrude knew better than not politely to follow the other lady's evident lead. And there was nothing more said of Europe, and very little happened to introduce me any more to the Regises, for the four days longer that I stayed at Outledge. But I thought there would be a continuing sometime. Story writers never *invented* the trick — in the sense of its not having been in the world before — of hints and scraps in first chapters that are to "evolve" into middles and ends. It is a higher and a deeper thing than that; and story writers, who put any sane, harmonious sense into their work, know very well that they cannot originate anything. It is just sights and insights; combining, and "putting a name to it."

There may not be any more story, as far as these people are concerned, in all my over-the-water outing with them. We are not bound to remain together; I would not be bound like that with anybody, in such mere experimental arrangement. We go to England in the same ship; we are all to spend the summer in Switzerland; our plans may fall in, and out, and in again, "sitting by the spring;" they say you can't lose anybody in Europe. Or they may fall out altogether. Any way, you have got now, all that I have. Anybody might have it, who was of the party; it is nothing contraband. And you, Rose, are of the party.

CHAPTER IV.

PACKING AND POCKETS.

.
. . . . It seems just as queer to me now, that I should really be going abroad, as it did years ago, when Eliphalet gave me that sudden invitation, and I anticipated it for a fortnight and then broke my leg and stayed at home.

What a blessed break and pain that was! If I had gone then, I should never have seen my dear little mother again, on this side of the great deep!

Now, everybody was surprised that I, so suddenly, took it into my own head to go. Nobody knew that Doctor Deane had told Emery Ann that she ought to leave off housework for a while, and have a change.

"If she were a rich woman," he said to me, "and educated to enjoy it, I should order her off to Europe. It is hard to prescribe idleness and change of scene to these quiet, limited people whose little daily industries are all their life."

Much he knew about it! Though he is a good doctor, and a good soul, too. There is life of all sorts, everywhere; and anybody can go about the world and pick up what belongs to them. Perhaps the quiet, limited people are most sure what does belong when they come to it.

Emery Ann likes to sit, with her knitting, in the front windows, of an afternoon, and "see the passing." That is exactly what I mean she shall do now. It is to be a long afternoon, and the "passing" is to be great waves and grand horizons, strange people, mountain-peaks, queer little foreign towns and villages, splendid cities, beautiful pictures; a whole hemisphere of panorama, out of which she shall take what is her own. And the comfort is, that I don't believe either of us will

make pretense of appropriating what is *not* ours. That is the pettiest kind of petty larceny.

Gertrude begged me, at once, to go with the Regises, and take Edith in my own charge. She had never been more than half content with the plan of letting her go with her "step-cousin;" and yet she had not said a final "No" to it. My unexpected determination was a "perfect providence."

Edith is just a little delicate in health, since she left school, which she has done early. The doctor has forbidden her parties and gay watering places, but advises change and amusement. Here is a need, again, that going to Europe exactly meets. What a wonderful thing it is that the descendants of the people who came across the water two hundred and fifty years ago, for a refuge from the oppressions and tyrannous customs of life, should be drifting back again now, as the only escape, in one way or another, from the penalties and wearinesses of our own civilization!

Yet, I don't quite believe — and I say it beforehand — in the "rest" of Europe that everybody promises you. I think I know how it will be; with the cares of travel, and the different management, and the unintelligible speech, and the strange money, and the continual reckoning up of things to be done and weeks to do them in, — probable expenses, and balance of credits, — I fancy it will still be a "rest that remaineth;" and that we shall begin to get it just about as we come to the end of all the fine sights according to Baedeker, and the pounds sterling in our banking account. Well, it will be something to look forward to, — the looking back upon it as accomplished. It is the "toeing off" that is the satisfaction, after all, even whilst you knit the stocking.

Gertrude thought I might do as well without Emery Ann.

"A foreign maid," she said, "who knew the language, — or a courier, — would not cost so much, and would be far more serviceable. Still, no doubt it would be a great comfort to feel that she was with me, especially if I should be sick or anything."

I told her that but for Emery Ann, I certainly should not

undertake to go at all. And she did not know the reason ; and nobody does, but you and Doctor Deane. Not even Emery Ann herself. She thinks, what is also very true, that I will not let her work any more, and that I cannot keep house without her, and that neither she nor I could bear to let an Irish girl loose in that bright little home-kitchen, to have her way among the tins and coppers. So that it only remains for us, like other people, to betake ourselves across the water for a while, to the Great Foreign Refuge for discouraged and disgusted Americans.

As to the kitchen, — Gertrude is to bring her own furnishings. She prefers it ; and the stove is to be put in the great “shed-room” for the summer. *Her* kitchen must be kept off a little ; ours will be an ante-room between it and the parlors, and her servants will have it for a sitting-room when their work is done. They are nice sort of women, too, considering ; else I don’t think I could have planned it so.

Doctor Deane tried to compliment me one day, and I rather snubbed him. “I think I could not order many mistresses to Europe,” he said, “for the health of their maids.”

“Doctor Deane !” said I, “if you ordered me a sea-voyage to save me the use of my right hand, don’t you think I should take it ?”

And I think he saw that that was simply the common sense of it.

There has been much continual question, all along, of what to pack to go, and what to pack to leave ; what to get new now, and what to buy abroad ; what to wear at sea, and what to throw overboard before we land.

“It will do to put through the port-holes,” says Emery Ann to half the old things in wardrobe and bureau. She has got the word, and the idea, — all but what the port-holes actually are. Very likely she thinks they are in the bottom of the ship.

“I don’t think we *can* change our clothing more than ten times in as many days,” I said to her at last ; and after that she laid aside less for the port-holes.

Another perplexity has been the sea-pockets.

Mrs. Shreve had made me one, and Seelie Rubb had made another, and just at last there have come two more, from the doctor's daughter and the minister's wife. One has a place for slippers, and another two nice little square places for bottles fitted in; and one has an oiled silk sponge-bag, and one a beautiful deep catch-all at the bottom. We don't know which we had better have handiest, and we never shall keep the run of things if we try to use them all. I have packed them over and over again, to see; and I can't remember a minute where I put the hair-pins, and where the pin-cushion; in which was the little spring flask for cologne, and the salts-bottle, and the fan; or whether the aconite and nux vomica vials were in the one that was to go over the washstand or in the berth. I did n't know where things had *better* go. I was sure we should want them all everywhere; and that there would be vast and impassable spaces in those little eight feet square state-rooms, as soon as we began to be miserable. I was seasick once, going down to Portland; and I could n't get a clean pocket-handkerchief out of my hand-bag, that was hung up in the *farther* corner, — just beyond arm's-length, — all night long.

As to my keys, and my eye-glasses, and my little sea-purse with shillings and half-crowns in it, I mislaid them altogether, half a dozen times, and grew quite hopeless about them, putting them into safe and convenient places. In the end, I think everything will settle into the big catch-all, as the sea itself finds its level; and I have made up my mind that *that* (you *won't* think I mean the sea) shall at any rate be tacked up in my berth.

Eliphalet has ordered a box of Weld Farm cider for us, and Mrs. Deane has brought me pretty nearly a peck of popped corn in a pillow-case! The Doctor laughed at her, she said; but she did n't care; "somebody who had been" had told her it was the best thing in the world to eat at sea. It makes a huge brown paper parcel in its final wrapping; but what will anybody think it is who seizes hold of it, as they all will, the first thing, to relieve me; while I shall lug unnoticed, the little basket, heavy with books and bottles? Is n't it much the

sort of helping we are apt to get with our life-burdens? So that people whose few grains of trouble are all popped, make pathetic show with them, and get them taken off their hands directly, while some of us struggle on as we may with little visible lead weights that strain hard and sore upon the heart-strength?

CHAPTER V.

SHIP-RIGGING.

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. . . . I DARE say you are quite right in prophesying that I cannot be so minute in everything for a whole year of going and doing, as I am now in these little breathing spaces of rest and looking forward, with all that relates to the year's plan and expectation, so fresh and minute in its interest for myself. But you need not bid me "drop the letter-writing just whenever and wherever it grows to be a tax." All my hiving-up of what I am to gather is to be with you, Rose. It is good to have a savings-bank to put your pennies in. "When a-twister a-twisting would twist him a twist," some one at the home end must hold to the twist! It *was* to have been the dear little mother; but she holds the other home-end for me now! It is the self-same thread that reaches on toward her, and as it twists it shortens, and I feel her fingers drawing at the line!

There is something in this going over to the "other side," which I look to for a great comfort.

I shall know that there *is* another side.

The ocean and the Alps are really *there*. I shall find it out as all the maps and the descriptions have never shown it to me.

We think about the things in this world that we have never seen, much as we believe in the things of the other world. We do not doubt; they have a place in, and qualify, all our thoughts and notions; we know they work into our life; but they are not great, present *facts* to us. They do not palpably *seem*.

I am going, now, into those actual presences. I shall learn how real they are. I shall know, I think, better than I have ever known, how real the things may be that lie upon that other side, to which men cross but once, and come not back, nor

send to us, with stories of their travel. I shall be able to think that life and love, like the planet, are round; and that though we lose out of our little horizon, nothing that holds to them by the eternal gravitation ever falls away.

It is good for me to write to you, my Rose-Noble. There is twice doing in it. The thought and the telling that go west, go east also, toward that "heavenly quarter" where some have said God's presence shines like a sun above the angelic faces! And, — oh, it is manifold with meaning! I shall feel, too, how certain it must be, after all, that from out that heavenly morning, sweet words and breaths *are* sent back into our waiting twilights, — writings are made in our hearts of the blessed things that they walk in the midst of, in that near, fair, Other Side!

I shall be *getting* messages; it is greatly what I have in my thought and hope in going. When I stand in wonderful places, where the rocky spires shoot up into the blue, and the white glaciers come down in awful splendor, I shall reach farther, I think, and touch nearer, to the glories and marvels among which she is moving, and which she longs and tries to share with me, — through these, that are of the same.

There is no gift or greatness of experience that ever descends upon me, that does not seem to come by her. Not the less, or even the less directly from the Father of lights; because I think, gladly, how "He maketh his angels, spirits; his ministers, a flame of fire." What can that mean, said of Him whose is the Holy Spirit, and whose thoughts toward us are angels, — who is himself the central sun of being, — except that the very heart-pulses out of the fire of his love are *living* flames, — *hearts also*, and that loving hands are bearers of the bread with which He feeds us out of heaven?

The breaking of the bread, Rose! The sharing! It was in this that the Lord was made known to them. The morsels — blessed and given to her above — that she reaches down to me, I will break again with you; and so, across deeps and deeps, we will all take together of the communion.

The two young girls have been so glad and busy together. For Mrs. Regis and Margaret are staying at Eliphalet's, now.

It has been so important what they should have for their ship-dresses, and then to travel in afterward. I was there one day, when Edith came up from Winter Street with patterns. There was no camel's hair to be got in the right shade, — the one she had set her heart upon. But this, in the newer stuff — "West-End frieze" — was almost exactly like, and the shopman said "camel's hair was rather going by, there were so many imitations; it was better style to wear the frieze."

"West-End freeze, now, is it?" said Eliphalet, who pretends to laugh, but whom nothing escapes in his girl's equipment and appearance. "Have it, by all means; only next week it will probably be South-End thaw, and then what will you do? That's the Boston climate, Pashie!"

But the child has got a pretty suit, and if anybody is pretty on a sea voyage, she will be. The rough, russet-colored stuff, with its big polished-wood buttons, looks so comfortable and jaunty and ship-shape, and the loose, large hood with its silk lining of the same color, makes her look like a brown gypsy or a brown nun, I don't know which. She has a brown leather belt and reticule, and a brown veil and a sealskin-jacket, and a beautiful brown-shaded lap-rug.

Margaret's dress is black, with a scarlet hood-lining, and her rug is in scarlet and black stripes; and Mrs. Regis has given her a tiny scarlet belt-bag, with black clasps.

"Don't be too kind to me, mamma," she said, when she took it.

She never says "mamma" unless, for the moment, she feels it. I have found that out. And I never saw a creature who felt a kindness quicker.

What will they all say when they see Emery Ann's "pumpkin hood?"

"I know what you want, out in a high wind," she says to me; "and there's nothing like a punkin."

It has five double runnings, and five fat rolls between, and five bows, one behind another, and a half-ellipse crown-piece flat against the back of her head, and it is made of green-figured brocade, fifty years old. And she has got a yard and a quarter of green barege for a veil or a necktie, as may happen. It had

not occurred to me, until she produced it, that you never do see green barege veils nowadays. I think she could not have bought it new; it must have been laid away among her stores, with the brocade. But I did not ask her. If ever I make a suggestion to Emery Ann about her dress, it must be beforehand of her preparations. And, indeed, it is the nicest way with everybody.

I have a deck-dress, too, a warm, fur-lined silk sacque, and a velvet hood with a violet lining. But I have a berth-day dress, — and I am afraid most of my days on board will be berth-days, — a long gray flannel wrapper, and the little purple and white knit head-gear you sent me, and it is of them I think with the firmest satisfaction and reliance.

I believe the ship-rigging is complete. I think, as far as we are concerned, the *Nova Zembla* is ready for sea.

A note came two days ago from Mrs. Regis, with "V. R." in the corner, like a royal missive, telling me to be sure and have a sea-chair, and an India-rubber hot-water bag; by which I knew that she would have her own, and that nobody near her must look uncomfortable. So I ordered the sea-chair, with "P. S." painted on the back, as was suitable for the last thing thought of. But I have motherdie's dear little tin foot-warmer, which is better than any bag, and warms heart and feet both, being a little piece of the very home-corner of home that I can take all over the world with me.

How can people help loving *things*, when they are all full of life magnetism, that even a finger-touch gets the thrill of? Eliphalet says, "Don't cumber yourself with holding on to all the traps you've ever 'got attached to.' The longer you keep them, the harder it will be to let them go, and they keep accumulating all the time. You can't carry anything *out* of the world, and you can't carry round much in it. I always get rid of old relics."

"You 'll be an old relic yourself, pretty soon, papa," said queer little Jeannie, who stood behind him, smoothing and playing with the hair that begins to shine with white.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LONG SEA-LETTER: IN MANY PARAGRAPHS.

.
 WE were notified to be at East Boston Wharf at nine o'clock on Tuesday. So we were up at five, and ate our breakfast together, Emery Ann and I, without saying much. Our silence said, "It is the last time."

I drank my coffee out of mother's brown-sprigged china cup, and then washed it, and put it away in cotton-wool wrappings, in the little old cabinet where I keep "relics," and of which the key goes with me on the ribbon round my neck, with mother's ring and picture. Mrs. Shreve is to take the cabinet to her house, when Eliphalet's folks leave for the city in the fall.

I wonder if I shall ever take out the sprigged tea-cup again, and drink from it? If I do not, it will be that I drink, instead, from the cup filled with the wine that shall be new in the Kingdom. So I trust, and so I have said to myself, when I have waked in the night, with that strange, startled feeling of what is before me, and the wonder that I never knew all my life before what the blessing was of sleeping quietly in the bed where I have slept since I was a child, — beside which prayers seem to have less far to go to God, — in the safety of the old home, where rain or sun might wake me to equally sure comfort in the morning, with immovable timbers and solid earth, like Almighty strength, beneath me, and so, not a fear in my heart.

So? It ought not to be so; though we must thank God for the peaceful environment. For the unresting floods move by Him, also; the sea is his, and He made it.

It is like the moon-picture; the fluid weight, — the floating rest. I will think of that. I will seem to myself more in his hand than ever, when I drift in that immensity where power is

almost tangible, and I can feel the liftings and fallings with which, as if I were a child in arms, He tends me. If I go down to the depths, He will go with me, and instantly I shall be at the Land whither I went, with the face I waited for shining suddenly upon me.

What if He say to me, "Thou shalt not cross *this* Jordan?" It will be that He shall bear me over into the other Canaan, and unto the better promise.

We got into a hurry, in that last hour, notwithstanding all the thoroughness of our preparation. Emery Ann's leather trunk would n't shut down and hasp, and I had to go half way to the bottom of the one I had marked for the hold, to get out some writing-paper to use on shipboard. Then, at the last minute, the front-door key, that had never been on the outside of the lock for years before, would not turn; and everything else was bolted and barred, and I was to take this key in to Eliphalet.

"*Things* make me madder than people, I do testify," said Emery Ann, as she struggled with it. "*Things* do act like creation, sometimes."

"They act as if they *knew*," I said, thinking of the correspondence, and that to lock ourselves out of the old home could n't and should n't be done in the turn of a finger. The little practical hindrance and bother saved us, after all, from some of the hardness and suddenness of the turning away.

We had to drive round by Mrs. Shreve's, and give her the key, and tell her that we had left the door unfastened, and that she must see to it and have it fixed, and keep the key for Eliphalet.

"And don't let me forget to tell him, Emery Ann," I said.

"Don't put it on to me," said that good soul, imperatively. "There aint no 'M' to the beginning of my name, and never was. And what I used to remember at all by, I'm all unhitched from now!"

One way and another, we had lost a full half hour. Eliphalet and Edith and Gertrude had crossed the ferry two trips before us, and had begun to watch anxiously, when we drove in at last under the long, open shed, full of groups of passengers

and their friends, and piles of luggage, with a line of carriages moving in and out through the midst.

It had seemed so queer, riding through Boston, — seeing the stores just open, as usual, where we had done busy shopping within the last few weeks, and at whose counters we should not stand again for such a strange, long time, yet where the buying and selling and crowding and parceling and callings of “Cash!” and weary waitings for change would be going on daily just the same; the horse-cars that we had dodged and signaled around that frantic Boylston Street corner, where they come from every way and go so many that you are half sure to take the wrong one and get whisked back through Temple Place again; the boys selling morning papers; Park Street Church, and dear King’s Chapel, and the Museum, where we had been with Gertrude and the children to see Warren in the “Overland Route;” all moving swiftly back and vanishing behind us, as pretty soon the continent — the holding of all our life — would do.

“It seems as if everybody was done with it, and it was going to be sunk, don’t it?” said Emery Ann. She always hits the nail of my thoughts on the head with her short-handled little hammer.

And here I must assure you, Rose, that when downright earnest does not demand it, and when outside surrounding puts her at a longer range of ceremony, she has a longer handle for the conversation, and can give gentler taps; even, if she chose, the little, delicate, polite ones, like other people’s, that don’t drive anything; though unless speech be directly required of her, I think she chooses rather the simple sublimity of silence. So that I have no uneasiness as to her being misunderstood, — I certainly do not care for her committal of myself, — among any persons, of reasonable apprehension, with whom we may be thrown. She *can* restrain her negatives, and forego contractions, and even take the trouble of final g’s. But what if she does n’t? When she lightens herself of impedimenta, it is apt to be that she may march down upon something; and her batteries of common sense are shotted with forceful dialect, as cannon are made emphatic with canister.

We found our party sitting about on their boxes, near one of the great doors which opened out on to the wharf. A man was going round with a paste-pot and labels, putting printed papers on all the pieces of luggage, — "HOLD," or "STATE-ROOM," — in big letters. When we got all our things together, the names and letters made curiously funny contrasts and unexpectedly imposing conjunctions.

There was "Stuart Regis, U. S. Army," on one piece; "V. R." on another, to which the paste-pot man was just affixing the appropriate ticket, "STATE-ROOM"; "Strong," on a zinc-covered box that looked ominous of treasure; and here came "Tudor," on Emery Ann's new square trunk, to antagonize the "Stuart" and complete the royal group. "E. A. T." in close-printed brass letters was on the end of the little, old-fashioned, knapsack-shaped leather one; and "P. S." was conspicuous on the box that tumbled up last, in such a hurry.

The girls read them off, and laughed about them. I told of a lady, whom I recollected, who used to travel with a great black "Saratoga" marked in white letters, "C. A. T.," and the porters used to call it the "black cat," with a perfect participle before the adjective of color.

With these trifles we passed away the minutes that, however precious, one never knows what to do with, — the last before the actual and long "good-by."

Gertrude sat beside Edith, on the "Strong" box, the girl's hand held fast in her own; Eliphalet moved about, here and there, never far off, and pausing close, first to one, then the other, of us two, who were the whole ship's company to him; several of Mrs. Regis's friends had come over to "see her off," and she stood, with her hands full of flowers, chatting pleasantly with them. A young man in the nicest of gray morning suits, with a white carnation in his button-hole, had found his way to Margaret Regis, and she, too, held a fresh bouquet, shyly, as if it had a meaning in it. A stylishly dressed girl was talking and laughing with them both, and called the young man "Harry." I noticed that Mrs. Regis occupied herself with her own group in rather a marked way, and that she and her step-daughter seemed to have quite separate leave-takings.

Is this breach of tacit confidence, I wonder, Rose-Noble? I don't think I can help it, if you are, as we agreed, to go with me, and have all my insights. What are statues, and pictures, and steeples, or even mountains and ice-torrents and cascades of cloud, compared to the human life beside us, to which the keys of our own heart-hidings let us in?

There was talk about the "tug," and "going down." There was a new rule about it, it seemed; the company had found that every passenger had a party, and that it would soon require a squadron to escort Her Majesty's mail packet down Boston harbor; so, ostensibly, there were to be no permissions, yet it was very well known that the tug would bring back as many as she could well accommodate.

"Of cou-rse, one could ma-nage it," said "Harry," with the indescribable English repose of lengthened syllables by way of emphasis, and the rising inflection at the end of his sentence, which have got to be "the thing." "But it's hardly worth while. They'll want a little time to themse-lves, I fancy, before the pitching begi-ns; and you'd be dead su-re to be si-ck, Flora!"

Margaret had turned a little aside while he was speaking, to answer an official who asked some question about valises for the state-rooms, and then she walked a step farther toward the doorway, and looked out—I thought, to see if there was any movement toward getting on board. It was only a step,—not out of hearing or conversation,—and Harry, without a noticeable pause, referred to her in the same quiet and very gentlemanly tone, "Don't you think so, Margaret?"

He called her "Margaret," then.

"I?" said Margaret, as if first noticing. "About going down,—oh, yes, I always think that is nonsense. People must turn back, sometime."

But there was a faint quality in her tone, that to me who had caught the meanings in tones for forty-eight years, sounded as if people might *wish* to go as far as they could, whether they did it or not. I do not think Harry observed it at all, and possibly she did not herself analyze it. And then it occurred to me that here were two young persons, between whose thoughts, perhaps,

there ought to be some delicate echo that was not; and that one of the two just faintly missed it.

Maybe you will tell me that I was in a great hurry with my insights, but I could not help them. They will come. I will try and not let them do any mischief. As Emery Ann said once, about thoughts: "You can't hinder 'em, any more than you can the birds that fly in the air; but you need n't let 'em light and make a nest in your hair."

The great bustle, that we had waited for as if it were not coming, began all at once. There had been some change of programme. The steamer had been hauled round to another wharf, and it seemed a few persons had had the sagacity to discover it in time, and to drive around and go on board there. We had seen a carriage, in which was a well-known prima-donna, drive up near us and go away again after the lady had exchanged a sentence or two with a friend, and we thought she had only come to take leave of some one. But we saw her name, now, on two large boxes, and were told that she was to be of our ship's company. There were two tugs puffing off steam at the pier side, and one was being heaped rapidly with luggage. Toward the other, across an intervening vessel, a stream of passengers was moving, and the word was passed suddenly along. Our moment had really come.

Gertrude held Edith in one hard, close grasp in her arms, and let her go. Eliphalet kissed her, and shook my hands strenuously. He does not kiss much; and perhaps I did not look as if I expected it; we have been grown up and quiet so long; but I know, at any rate, that we kissed one another in our hearts, if we did not in the sight of the crowd.

"Good-bye, Pashie; take care of yourself!"

And we were on the plank, and then in the crowded little boat, whose hot deck gave hardly standing room; and they were on the wharf, with their carriage waiting behind them.

A little wave of hand and handkerchief, — a few more movements in the crowd around us and around them, — and that was the last. I knew Eliphalet would hurry Gertrude home, and I turned round and talked fast to Edith, who was pushed up against a capstan, or something, and made her sit upon it, and

put her feet on my traveling basket, while I settled down on a coil of rope. "Take care of yourself!" I was sure of all that Eliphalet felt and meant; but I thought over that queer modern phrase of farewell, which takes the place of the solemn old prayerful blessing. It is like all the other outsides we stop in, nowadays; shrinking from sounding deep. Nothing goes into word, that is not tangible and practicable. Common speech is full of straws that tell the way of the world in the world's thinkings. I wonder if we shall ever come to — "Bye, bye! Look out for your atoms!"

Was n't it queer that I caught myself fancying that, in the midst of my real heart-parting? If I had been writing a common, conventional letter, I should not have put it in. Perhaps I should not have remembered it. I should only have recalled the general mood, natural and of course, and have credited myself with nothing but the inevitable sentiment of the occasion.

Are they deep down and significant, or do they only float over depths with which they have nothing to do, — these odd perceptions and suggestions that come to us at the flood-tides of experience?

I did not see how Margaret and the Mackenzies — I heard some one speak of that young girl as "Flora Mackenzie" — parted. I was not looking. I am not always looking out or in.

I thought something, — of constraint, weariness, pain, whatever it might be, — had lifted from Margaret's face, as the boat moved off. The prolonging of feeling that belongs to an unavoidable moment is a weariness. She sat down low upon her shawl-bag, and the people about her closed her in. She got up, once, as we rounded the pier end, when somebody said, "There they are." She waved her handkerchief, as if in case it might be seen, and then her eyes seemed to search the crowd uncertainly. I do not know whether she discovered her friends' faces or not.

"What is the use?" she said, as she met my look and sat down again. "We may as well begin our year's parenthesis."

It was a curious expression, was it not, for a young girl, out of whose life a whole year must seem so much?

I saw that Mrs. Regis heard it, and took some meaning from it. But a life parenthesis may include more than it interrupts.

Nova Zembla!

We felt it more like Tartarus, as we climbed on board. The July heat that had steamed us, like potted pigeons, on the deck of the crowded tug, was blazing in the air, and reflected from the white-scoured planks, and the flashing brass of capstan, and compass, and belaying-pins. We cast a longing glance at the seats under the protecting awning; but we had to dive down the companion-way, as soon as we could find it, and rush about like lost rabbits in a burrow, among the narrow, bewildering passages, and from side to side of the vessel, in search of our state-rooms, which we knew so well on the ship's plan, but which seemed all turned round and mixed up now we had got among them.

Fore was aft, and aft fore; port and starboard were unknown terms; and right and left were nowhere. It was all wrong, and nothing left; there was "a hen in every nest," Emery Ann said; and every hen had brought a brood with her. But at last we found out where to look for the numbers, and remembered that Emery Ann's and mine were 121-2-3-4; the big corner state-room, amidships; and we flew to the four corners, and discovered it at the fourth. There had been a crowd there before, or we should have seen our bags and boxes piled up within the doorway.

The little passage next, from which opened the room that Edith was to share with some other lady, — Mrs. Regis and Margaret were quite on the opposite side, with a double row of inside state-rooms between, — was filled up by three or four persons, gentlemen and a lady, who chattered volubly to some one farther in and out of sight.

Well! Was this the "big state-room" that we had chosen, and that Mrs. Regis was so glad we had, because she had the mate to it? It was exactly large enough, in the space between sofa, and washstand, and berths, and the box that must remain just inside the door, for two persons to stand, close together; I may say, if they affectionately embraced. But there *was* a

sofa; and in the corner, at its foot, under the port-hole, a square projection that afforded a top like a table. On this we piled bags and baskets, and ranged a few essentials in some order.

"If they 'll only stay put," said Emery Ann. "But I suppose they 'll be all upside down, and we too, as soon as we start.

"Then it won't make much difference as to our mutual relations," said Edith, laughing.

"I presume it won't," said Emery Ann, solemnly.

We tacked up the "catch-all," and hung two other sea-pockets on hooks, near the looking-glasses. We lifted one box down from the other, and pushed it close to the foot of the sofa, in front. Now, one person could stand, and one could sit.

We unrolled our shawl bundles, and took out our hoods. Emery Ann looked with a sudden mistrust at her "punkin."

"Do you *s'pose* I shall wear that, Fourth o' July? I'm inclined to think I was partially distracted when I made it.

"The Fourth will find us somewhere off Newfoundland, I imagine," said I; "with the winds, maybe, coming down from Labrador."

"Does n't appear likely now, does it?" And she laid the green pumpkin, which it certainly seemed might ripen in many days of weather like this, up into her berth.

She had insisted on taking the upper berth. "I was always famous for climbin'," she remarked; "and you *know* you're sure to tumble if you get a chance." •

Meanwhile, poor Edith, who had made another essay toward her own beleaguered quarters, came back, still crowded out.

I hastened to present myself with her at the entrance to the passage. "This is Number 108, I believe," I remarked, inquiringly, to a stout personage who stood between the doors.

"Ah! Is it this lady who has Number 108?" the large gentleman returned, blandly, with a foreign accent. "Allow me to introduce to you, Madame, my wife."

"Madame, my wife," partly emerged at the word, and Monsieur, the husband, stood back as flat against the partition as his dimensions would allow, that Edith and she might peep at each other across him. "Madame, my wife," was also very stout. And Madame's boxes and rugs were everywhere. The small

sofa was occupied with a large, flat piece of luggage, which had refused to go under the berth; and upon this were a portmantau, shawls, and several bulky parcels.

"You had better come back with me, Edith," I said, with perhaps a slightly severe quietness, "until Madame has had time to arrange her packages."

"Ah, yes, certainly," said Madame. "They will all go quite well, presently."

But I had a persuasion in my mind that they would "go quite well" all across the Atlantic, pretty much as they were, with certain not comforting allowance for the plunging of the ship. It needed only a glance at the expression of things, to see that. Edith brought her little valise into our room, and hung up her hat and put on her Capuchin hood, and said it did not matter; we would go on deck. She supposed Monsieur at least, would be gone by and by.

"At all events, we can take you in, or whatever you want to keep here. That was what we took the corner state-room for, you know." And the corner state-room suddenly looked palatial in size, and homely in comfort, after the heaping and confusion in the little den next door.

"I'm afraid I shall never get on with Madame, my wife," said Edith, meekly.

"You shan't, if you don't want to," said Emery Ann, briskly. "I'll see first how my Yankee will fit on to her French, or whatever it is."

Mrs. Regis came round now, to see that we had every comfort, to remind us of the things that we should want close at hand, if we were sick, — and so forth.

"You have brandy, of course? And lemons? Yes; and a salt's-bottle? And there's your foot-warmer. Quite nice, especially for deck. I saw your chair, as we came down, and had it put in a good place, with ours. I've spoken to the deck-steward, and we shall be all right, I've no doubt. Will you go up now? Miss Tudor, you will need your hood. You have one? We shall be in quite another climate within an hour."

As we went up the stairs she said, "We shall have seats at the first table, at the Captain's end. I have arranged all

that. It makes a great difference in the pleasantness of the voyage."

We were steaming smoothly down the harbor. Somehow, Deer Island and Fort Independence, and Blue Hills and Fort Warren, all looked very different to me from what they ever had done in day's trips down to Hingham in the Rose Standish. They were small landmarks; they had to do with but one little indentation of a great shore we were leaving for another; though the little indentation was the harbor of the Hub, and all the world we had ever known much of lay right around it. Will home, and place, and possession, and history, look that way to us in the hour of setting sail across the Deep whose ships steer only eastward?

We sat comfortably in our chairs under the awning, — Emery Ann had a smaller folding seat, which was all she would have, — and made our first observations of our fellow passengers, in general. We could not be quite sure who were to be with us all the way, for the tug was still alongside; but the ladies who had put by, as we had, high hats and lace veils, and who in hoods and wraps occupied the initialed reclining chairs, were certainly for Liverpool; and here and there a gentleman not specially attached with the "seeing off" air, to any party, and wearing a felt wideawake, or a sea-cap, might be noted as on the steamer's list. The officers, with their gold bands on sleeves and caps, passed to and fro. I wondered which, of two stout men with fine faces, and exactly similar dress, might be Captain K.

What a curious life it must be, sailing back and forth, carrying your little world of human beings with you always, and changing it every time! Pretty soon, perhaps, these gentlemen would begin to get acquainted and make themselves agreeable among us all; and it would always seem to us as if they had been especially and separately *our* friends, because they had taken us over; yet in a fortnight they would be turned about again with a fresh fourscore, and we should have been tipped out like any other lading, to find our way whithersoever we had been sent.

Mrs. Regis was just what I might have expected her to be, — the most fittingly and harmoniously arranged woman on board. It had occurred to me to wonder what would become of the invariable, immaculate cap that seemed almost like a part of her face ; and what would replace it.

She was dressed now in a suit of fine English waterproof, of deep, black-purple ; a hood of the same, with black silk lining and tassels hung back upon her shoulders ; and upon her head was a fleecy, knit thing, with one soft, white roll, which gave the customary, and the best possible, framing to her features. I thought, looking at her, of the piquant speech of a whimsical friend of ours, that “a woman ought to be born a widow ;” “perhaps, and fatherless,” I had answered at the moment ; and the absurd *mot* and repartee came back to me more than once afterwards. People are born, in a sense, what they become ; fate is folded up in us ; but nobody can skip over the history into the pose and *rôle* it puts them in.

Am I minute enough ? You charged me to “tell everything, — especially about the voyage,” which travel-stories always begin with pretty graphically and never keep straight on with.

I would not write a book of travels for all the world. I do not mean to write travels, even to you. I put down my “outings” when I stayed at home ; now that I go abroad and about, I shall very likely fall back mostly into my *abidings*. It is with larger living as with longer living ; it only sets old things at a farther focus, and looks keener into the far off and the gone-by.

Besides, what after all would my little foot-tracks, or my pen-tracks about them amount to, except that they *were* mine. You have got it all in books, over and over again ; and it is in pictures, now, better than in books. I will bring you back photographs, Rose, and we will talk over them together ; meanwhile you shall have just the little happenings and thinkings that make the journey mine. If people only told just what *was* theirs and did not fall into the technical, inventorial gabble which makes you tired and want to shut up the covers !

I have sometimes wondered why I can never go all the way with them. It is nice at the first, fresh start ; but afterward

the spring all falls out of it. The first pages are real, are charming; then comes the smatter; strings of names and places hashed up together, with epithets peppered over,—a mere warming up of what you have had served so many times before, without an additional flavor. A few pages of encyclopædia and thesaurus are a refreshment after it.

I think it is because they put down the things they have run about among, instead of those “a part of which they were.” It ought to be a record like the holy Acts Luke wrote,—of “that which their eyes have seen and their hands have handled, of the word of life.” For the word of life is abroad in the world to-day, for them who “go abroad” to find it.

The best motto for a volume of travels would be, like that of any enterprise based only on real, tangible, safe capital,—“Limited.” But “Limited” to the things of day to day,—if there is much life in them,—spreads out so! I must beware of that, and write the word on both sides, if I can.

The weather was changing before we noticed it. We met an east wind before we got down to the Light, and fog came rolling up from the Bay. It began to be rough, and the little tug pitched up and down.

“They’ll have a genuine touch of the sea before they get back,” said a passenger. One of the gold-strapped gentlemen was passing by.

“You do keep some of it on board, after all; don’t you, Captain K.?” continued the speaker, addressing him, debonairely, and buttoning a large rough coat closer about his throat.

“Yes! Which?” Answered out of the hard, authoritative face a quick voice, that sounded as if it could have fun in it when there was time.

“Nova Zembla weather.”

“Never sail without it. Keep it for the passengers, though. Don’t take the corks out till we get rid of the landmen.—Have that hawser ready for the tug!” he shouted over the rail, in a quite changed tone, to the men below. And he was off, forward, on his rapid business march.

The tug came, with dizzy heaving and dipping motion,

alongside. People crowded over the plankway in the fast determining rain, happy if they had umbrellas. We had not begun to feel very much the movement of the large steamer; but to look at that of the little vessel swaying up and down, and to watch the swelling of the waves, was growing sensibly perilous. We were glad when the tug was loose, and bounded away from the ship's side; and we were glad, with a little brief and futile gladness, that we were not on board of her.

When the first dinner-bell sounded, just after she had got beyond farewell signals, looks and questions were exchanged with a sudden irresolute timidity. A great many people were not hungry. A good many preferred the evils they had, in the drift of the rain under the dripping awning, to those they knew not of below.

Those who were going down announced it with a marked jollity of manner, as who should say, "Certainly; begin as you mean to go on; we dine regularly, of course." And they walked off with a very great superiority, italicized by the air of making nothing of it. Not yet, at any rate; that would be too absurd; we were scarcely well out into the Bay.

Edith had looked a little pale, a few minutes before, and had risen from her seat and moved quickly and quietly toward the companion-way. I followed her, of course.

"Are you — wanting anything, dear?" I would not say the word that verifies itself so easily on shipboard.

"No. Don't say anything. Don't come!" And she was so peremptory, dear little soul, that I went back, feeling distantly conscious, also, that I had n't quite the strength of mind just then to "set an example" judiciously.

"You will be sure to be ill if you don't eat," said Mrs. Regis to me. "A little bit of beef is the best thing, and they have real English roasts here. You had better come with me."

"Emery Ann?" — I began cautiously. But Emery Ann's face was turned aside, and the "pumpkin" vibrated faintly, but decidedly. The deck steward rushed up. "Will you have anything brought, ma'am — miss?" he asked, glancing with a wise generality from one to another. I suppose he could read faces and the backs of heads, for he rushed away again without an answer.

After my piece of beef, nothing happened, that I know of, for half an hour. I am not sure, exactly, where anybody else was during that time, and I found out,—or I do on reflection,—the depravity of my nature; for I am tolerably certain I did n't care. I know I had a book in my hand, and a lemon on the table beside me; and that I was in the little lower ladies' cabin, not far from our state-room; and that I did not allow myself to suppose it was time to "imagine anything;" and that I occupied myself with a diligent and forcible determination that I would n't. This resolution seemed to encounter something between my heart and my throat, which it had been summoned like a policeman to take hold of, and it held on, for its own life.

All at once an evil suggestion came to me that in my state-room was the brandy-bottle; that I had very absurdly forgotten all about it; and that a teaspoonful after dinner (which I began to remember like a guilty deed) would probably act as a "preventative." I recollect a few steps beyond the cabin door; a blind stagger along the narrow passage as the ship rolled; a plunge into the little encumbered square of territory that we called our own; and a vision of Edith's pale face, with a queer, suffering smile upon it, as she lifted it toward me from over the wash-basin, and sank back upon the sofa.

Emery Ann was up in her berth, with her hood on. When I asked her, in a pause of personal relief, if anything was the matter, she replied, very much in her throat and with a sepulchral significance, "I should like — to go — into a *dor* — mant state!"

The stewardess came in, and offered services; she said it was "reely very rough, and most of the ladies was sick;" we heard Madame, my wife, in awful spasms on the other side the thin partition; the steward came round and lit the candles in the three-cornered glass boxes between the rooms; the rain, and the tramp, and the voices sounded on into the night, above; we asked each other no more questions, but suffered manifest destiny together without words. But I parodied Sir John Moore's burial over and over in my mind as I lay there, and tenderly gazed at poor Edith's head, and bitterly thought of the morrow. How long could we endure it? And there were to be *ten* morrows.

I thought as I rolled on my narrow bed and crushed down my pitiless pillow, how the rattle and swash would keep on overhead, and we far away on the billow. I fell into a feverish nap at last and began again where I had left off, when I heard the early stir on board, — the stewards running up and down the staircase, a clatter of dishes, and voices with a cheerful swagger in them asking about wind and weather and the way we had made in the night. "Lightly they'll laugh that our spirits are gone, and for our small spunk may upbraid us," I rehearsed, in a helpless, imbecile way; but little we'll reck "if they'll leave us alone, in the beds where our folly has laid us."

I had just weakly finished that in my mind, when that marvelous woman, Mrs. Pride, whom nature, constitution, and choice had qualified for what one would call the last profession on earth, — if it be on earth, — came in upon her morning round.

I looked up at her in awe and wonder, as if she had come on wings. There she stood, serenely poised, with her comfortable bulk, trig in buttoned corsage, linen collar and frilled cap, while I lay collapsed in the wreck of my neat yesterday's toilet, feeling that as to ever building myself up again into a visible and conventional woman, I might as well try to build a solar system.

"A little better, ladies? Will you have breakfast?"

Edith groaned.

"A few biscuits? A little beef tea? An orange?"

"Oh, I *would* like an orange," said the dear child, faintly, as if making the first blind grasp at life again.

The bedroom steward was passing.

"Alick!" called Mrs. Pride, "some oranges here, — No. 121, immediate."

And she had the excellent sense to say no more about it, but to depart herself, and presently fetch back a plate of little "Peek and Freans." If she had *said* "biscuit" again, I could not have forgiven her; but when she handed me the crisp little morsels, I looked up with an infantile gratitude and took one. It was a reassurance to find I could nibble, and swallow; and that nature, after her fierce reversal, seemed timidly inclined to

return to first methods, and try whether a soul might not eat, and yet not surely die.

Then we hailed each other across the gulfs of misery that had separated us.

"Edie! are you really a *little* better?" I enunciated slowly.

"Yes, auntie. I think so. But how — shall we — ever — get out of this?"

"Emery Ann!"

"Present!" answered a voice from the upper berth, feebly.

"But I can't put up my hand."

I wondered whether she were dreaming herself back thirty years, into the district school at Shenean. In last extremities we do go back to such far first things.

"Are you awake?"

"I presume so."

"Have you got some" —

"Don't say it. Yes, I have. It can't be talked about." And she crunched, gently, but I am sure that it was with all her force, to let me know.

We smoothed ourselves a little, as we were; and there we remained.

All day long we listened to the footfalls and the voices; the hauling of ropes; the great pulse of the screw; the calls of the officers, the whistle of the boatswain, the yo-hoi's of the crew; to sound of inquiry, or petition, or faint misery, from the open state-rooms; to the frequent and resonant anguish of Madame, my wife. Night crept on again, and the little glass boxes were illuminated; the bedroom steward came in and put a front-piece to the sofa, and brought extra pillows; and Mrs. Pride tucked Edith up more comfortably. And that second night there was less rolling, and we really slept.

Shall we ever forget the waking, that third bright morning, when the little round port-hole window was all blue with a clear day, and the vessel lay almost quietly on a calm sea, and sailors' voices were singing with a strange, wild thrill of melody, a kind of song-jargon to which at every other line the burden was, — "Yea-hey! Roll the man down!"?

I saw a pair of boots descending in air before me, from above. "I wonder if they'd roll a woman up?" said Emery Ann, with resurrection in her tone. "For I'm going on deck!"

"Emery Ann!" said Edith, with a little gurgle of a laugh, as if she had almost forgotten how, "you would put courage into a caterpillar!"

"I did n't mean to say anything till I could," answered the woman whose name is Tudor, and who has a far-away blood-royal in her, I doubt not.

We had all lain listening, and looking, in the still rapture of a painless waking, and the sweeping in upon us of a new breath of hope, until we brimmed over in cheerful speech.

"It must be a glorious morning! If there could be,—how long *have* we been here?—eight days more of weather like this!"

I forgot, all at once, how bitterly I had thought of the ten morrows.

Mrs. Pride appeared as I spoke; rubbing her hands complacently, as if she had made the morning; at least, as if it had been made on board. I noticed afterward the same sort of innocent assumption in the other ship's people, and in the passengers, exchanging congratulations.

My dear Rose! it *was* all ours!

I have talked before about "being in the middles;" but—in the middle of this great, round, blue, heaving, sparkling sea—of this over-spanning hemisphere of azure light! With the wind all in *our* sails, the fragrance in our nostrils, the greatness and freedom in our pulses as we bounded up and down,—the whole space,—the whole watery planet—for where were the continents? our own!

After the sea-wretchedness, the sea-ecstasy! Truly, the latter end of Job was blessed beyond his beginning!

Mrs. Pride helped us up. We shook and we smoothed; we bathed, and brushed, and pinned, ourselves and each other, the little that we could; during the process, we overflowed no more in glee; it was a struggle.

But we left that state-room. With the assistance of Alick and Mrs. Pride, and a strange gentleman with the officer's band, into whose arms I fell as I reached the staircase, and who

lifted me kindly along in my faint bewilderment to the deck, and put me into a chair, — I discovered afterwards that he was the doctor, — we were translated from grief to glory ; and that which I have just spoken of was what we found ourselves in the midst of, when our senses gathered themselves again, and we lay among our wraps with our faces heavenward, — for heaven was everywhere, — as we could have lain forever.

After the first transport of our own coming up out of the catacombs began to subside into quieted content, we looked round to see who else had risen among the blessed.

Mrs. Regis was there, — had she ever been entombed ? walking the deck with Captain K——, who came over with her to us, presently.

“Do you know what she says?” he demanded, after the introduction, with his off-duty, holiday air. “She wishes there were *ten-thousand* miles between Boston Light and Fastnet Rock.”

“I dare say there are,” I replied placidly ; “for I have n’t the least idea where Fastnet Rock is.”

“Not know that ! What in the world are you going out for to see ? It’s on the top of the Tower of London, to be sure ; the greatest ceure-iosity in Europe !” And he wheeled Mrs. Regis round, laughing, and they walked forward again.

Some people think Captain K—— is too ready with his nonsense ; but I never saw a man more judicious in applying it, or more kindly quick in perceiving where a little would do good. The same quickness of sight and action goes into his work as a commander. I have known him stop in the middle of a joke, to walk suddenly away with that other face of authority shutting instantly over his fun, give a rapid order, and come back, relaxing his features as with a sweep of sunshine, and finish the absurdity from where he left it off. He noticed the little children ; he never let an invalid be neglected ; he gave up his own room to a very sick lady, who had an undesirable state-room ; and I think he keeps his nonsense as they do champagne cider, for remedy and resource ; he establishes a way with it that I believe he knows would stand him in stead in a time of real, anxious necessity. That is my insight of Captain K—— ; but many

people measure him only a half line deep, and find fault that there is nothing profound in him.

We hardly remembered whether we had eaten or not, — we were taking in such direct vitality from sky and sea ; but they brought us some beef-tea, and it tasted delicious. They make wonderful beef-tea on board the *Nova Zembla*.

Then we saw ladies sipping lemonade, and we called for some. Food and drink began upon primal conditions, and had the very joy of life in them. We remembered that we could have dinner on deck ; that we need not go down out of that upper radiance all the day long, — until the day went ; that we should see the whole, round, vast circle of the sunset glory, and the perfect hemisphere of stars. We did not care how many thousand miles we had to go like that.

Why, I think the Sea is the greatest and the best of it !

Margaret Regis was wrapped up a little way off ; we nodded and smiled at each other, but did not dream ; yet, of getting nearer. Mrs. Regis's promenade did not continue long ; she understood the brief leisure of the Captain, and she paused and resumed her own seat by her step-daughter's side, after a few more turns, in time not to be deposited.

A lady sat near them whom I chose at once, from among all those strangers about me, as one whom I should like to come to know better.

She was of my own age, or more ; she wore a little black silk hood, under which hair of a singular silvered gold came out in gentle waves, fretted into curliness by the sea wind. She had a face of beautiful peace ; one of those faces whose look is like a listening to pleasant whispers. I wondered if it were always so, or whether it was the just coming up, as it was with me. I do not mean that my own face shone ; I don't suppose it could, like that, but it was the self-same shining that I felt upon my heart.

She seemed to have a party with her, or to have helped make one up. A young lady, with lovely dark eyes, who held a little girl upon her lap ; a tall, noble-looking man, of ripe middle age, accompanied by a bright, handsome boy, who paused now

and then in his walk to lean over them and speak a few pleasant words (I heard him call the young lady "Faith," and the boy said "Mamma"); another gentleman who drew a camp-stool near while I was looking, and whom I had heard addressed as "General." One of the young generals, doubtless, made by the war,—it occurred to me to think; for he could not be many years beyond thirty. Very handsome; I have hardly ever seen a finer face, or one with more strength in it.

A few sentences that I caught showed me that they had known each other before, but had found each other out as fellow passengers since they came on board.

"The drift of life is a wonderful thing,—stranger even than ocean currents," said the lady with the silver shine in the golden hair. "I never came on board a steamship,—and I have crossed several times,—that it was not more or less singularly exemplified. You and I, Mrs. Armstrong, have not met before since we worked together and grew to be friends, in the Sanitary Commission; and General Rushleigh—but then *he* has been nearly everywhere!"

"So it is not strange, perhaps, that I should be here. Certainly it is one of the very pleasant things!"

"Very certainly," rejoined the lady, with a smile that turned the application back; but I could see by a kind of rare simpleness in General Rushleigh's face, that he had only spoken precisely as he felt; and that there was no mere compliment in his word to make him take heed, even now, of its doubleness.

I noticed Mrs. Regis turn her head slightly, as the name of General Rushleigh had been mentioned. But he sat with his back toward her at the moment. She knew him, very likely, as she seemed to know half the world. I had seen her talking with the Lady of Peace—as I christened my elderly friend till I should know her worldly appellation—just before he had come up; and then she had withdrawn into her rugs and had taken up her book. There was no immediate and graceful way of coming out again at once, and Mrs. Regis never did anything that had not graceful relation. But I knew from that one little half turn of her head that she would "take up her connection," first or last, among these others, and that through her, perhaps,

during the voyage, our two parties might more or less approach. I might come to know my Lady of Peace, whose face had so much in it for me. I never thought — why was I of so little faith as not to think? — how sure, and near, and even very soon, our knowledge was to be, and what messages and gifts she had for me!

I felt a-questioning, faithlessly. I was certain of these faces, these tones; of the spirit that I felt by intuition, — yes, by kinship (for it is not praise of one's self to say that one knows her own needs, and what natures hold the answers and the helps), to be in, and moving between these people. The Spirit that we pray daily to be kept in, all the day long; near to each other in the Blessed Light, — near to the Light itself, that we know by the soul's gladness. "To walk before Thee in the land of the living." I think that asking asks all heaven, and its instant beginning.

. I knew it by the unspoken signs, and by little words I heard that I have not written down.

Why was I going to Europe with Mrs. Regis? Why were we to stand together before the high presence of white Alps, and in the awfulness of mountain gorges? Would there be, anywhere, a common language for us, syllabled or unsyllabled, in which we could truly speak to one another? What identical word was coming to us, at this moment, from this great surrounding of the sea and air, this clear antiphony of the two blue deeps?

And we should step on shore from the same deck with such as these, to go our several ways. It almost seemed to me, in my sudden bitterness, as if it would be the parting to the right and to the left.

I felt as if a whole, large life were spoiled, perhaps, by a mistake that I had made; a shadow fell upon me of what married pairs may feel sometimes, when the most terrible of all human misgivings rushes down upon their hearts with a darkness.

I tell you I was faithless, and unjust; was not the Light shining on us all? We are only to get close enough, — close to where the Light gets, — to each other. But it is so much readier, so much more blessedly inevitable, with some!

Had I turned away from any leading, or taken any willful way of my own, that I found myself here? I had not started for Europe without much weighing and thinking. It had not been easy to leave the dear old grooves of wont and duty, the little plain signals for every-day work that I was happy in; the places full of sweet sacredness that held me in their own inner atmosphere; to come out from all into a strange holiday which I almost began to fear and shrink from already, as if I should get adrift in it from my dear, best anchorage, and never find and hold it again as I had held it. Were there things in me — foolishnesses, worldlinesses — that had even already made their ill response to something like themselves outside of me, and bewildered me out of my simple, safe identity? In the midst of the real joy of the morning, there were unrealities that I had caught myself troubling about. Perhaps — I don't know — I may confess them presently.

I took hold of the only line that ever leads me back from the labyrinths of distrust and self-blame.

I said, — Surely it was right that I should do this very best thing for my dear and faithful Emery Ann; the thing that she could only get through me. I did not think, now, that it had been too much, — uncalled for; that a summer down in Maine would have done as well. I knew what that would have been. The same old toils, for some one else; she would "help," wherever she was. I knew I did it to give her a great, free piece of the great, free world, that she had as good a right to as anybody, and that would fit on to her beginnings which had all been so real, better, perhaps, than if they had been the unlived beginnings of books and technical culture.

I said, that it had been surely right, again, for me to take Edith, and mother her for Gertrude. And these things, following each other, had put me with Mrs. Regis, of all the other possible companions in the world.

Then it was right. I would wait and see. I got back to my faith by following back my leading. I may have as much errand with these people, — with Margaret and her step-mother, who at first would not seem to need me at all, or I them, — as ever I had with Seelie Rubb, or the Sunday strays, or the

Shreves. It was a new leaf. I must turn it over, and spell as the letters come.

But the silliness, Rose, that had come over me in little whiffs, even at my eight-and-forty years! The little, petty, self-silliness! Shall I pretend to sound and interpret others, and not sound and confess myself?

It had always been so easy, hitherto, to be plain Patience Strong. Growing old, never having been much to anybody, except to the little mother who had been growing old—who was now heavenly young—before me. Never having been beautiful, or gay, or charming; only a little kind and useful here and there; never left alone, or dreary, because put in such safe, simple relations, where small kindnesses and uses made friends. Was this just why I was put out here suddenly, to find that even at forty-eight years old I could wish that there were something portable about me,—some brightness, some attraction, something left of youth, even, that would express me as I felt myself inside, and draw to me a little of that which so many others seemed to have as of course,—a mere part of natural living?

I had not known, before, my solitariness in the world. I had not understood, years ago, the sudden, little tender pity that came, sometimes, in mother's look at me. I knew what she thought of now; it came into my own look at myself. Or was it her gentle, wistful watching of me still?

Sometimes, Rose, I get tired of wearing this homely old self. I would like to carry some sign of the world-wide beauty that I never did carry. I would like to be in pure, fresh, outward harmony with the lovely morning; a human piece of it; as these girls, whom I love so in their freshness, seem to be.

I said to Emery Ann, once, that day: "How nice it is to belong to it. To have it in your face, and your hair, and your eyes, and your smile!"

She knew what I meant. Some bright young things had just gone by, the wind blowing color upon their cheeks, and the light playing with their loosened locks; and somebody near had said: "It can't toss *them* amiss; it is we old ones must keep tidy!"

"Good looks are a snare," said Emery Ann; "especially to them that haven't got 'em."

I laughed with amused apprehension; Emery Ann thought it was at her contradiction. So she went on, as her way is, into more contradiction, and involution of phrase and grammar, saying the same thing.

"Tis so. It don't make any difference what kind you've got, or whether you have n't got any; they take your mind up exactly the same; more, finally. It's the tidiness that's the bother; you can't, half the time; it's the tidiness that gets away from you, because there is n't enough to keep tidy *with*. I'd just as lief be *old*, as not; I'd as soon be sixty as forty; but I *do* grudge coming to pieces in spots!"

Even Emery Ann! Well, I did not laugh this time. It is in us all,—the beauty of being, and living, and having,—the striving after "tidiness" that is perfect fitness,—which we never attain to, or which is just shaped out to be taken away.

Did I say that to myself? Or did something put the thought so to remind me?

"Shaped out to be taken away."

The words were drawn, by the truth of things, to a real, definite illustration. I remembered some sentences of Ruskin's that had been curiously beautiful to me, just from the fact they told; and now the fact interpreted itself. He explains to us how one of the ideas of architecture grew; from observing the outline left, when the rose or the trefoil, or whatever was first traced for carving, had been cut and taken away. That which was left was as beautiful as the central design; to appropriate Emery Ann's word, which holds, that way, a great gospel,—"*more, finally!*"

So God shapes the flower of beauty in us, and seems perhaps only to reveal its glory by a taking away,—withdrawing his thoughts out of the heart of our living. But He sees how fair in the life stands the outline that is left; how the tender curves bend and cling about an emptiness, and declare in themselves a wonderful, essential grace. He makes that which remains by the same stroke which separates and removes; the rose is always in the midst,—a rose of heaven seen through

the arches where its place was; and so He chisels and thins and glorifies us, until in the immortal aspects in which we shall stand before Him, only so much of the mere form of being shall remain as shall make it possible for us to hold these thoughts of his with which He has been, by depriving, filling us.

Emery Ann had not read Ruskin, and I could not tell her a long story out of a book just then. I saved it up for another time.

But she sat and looked at the waves, with their crisp, white, flashing tops. "Even the water is touched off with bright little curls," she said.

"Yes," I answered; "and it comes, and it goes, and nothing stays. But nothing is lost, and everything is beautiful in its season."

"Well, — I guess we can stand it, if He can."

She spoke softly, and I knew she meant just the same thing as if she had said, "We can wait — with God."

The lady with the gray-gold hair had a book in her lap, and when I looked over at her again she had taken it up, and was reading bits, and then looking off from it, thinking. She said something about it presently, — I did not quite catch what, — to Mrs. Armstrong.

"I do not read these modern essays much, or the discussions at all," said the clear, peculiarly feminine voice of the younger woman. "They tire me so. It seems so needless, when we have all the best things sure; whatever little dusts they may raise with their digging among the atoms."

"I read them," was the reply. "I am glad of them. They give me keys the writers will not unlock with. How strange it is that they do not know how to put God's alphabet together and see it spell his word!"

A third gentleman who had walked up at the moment with Mr. Armstrong, stood by her as she spoke, and caught the saying.

"They are very honest, Miss Euphrasia. Don't you think so? They would be glad to see. They stand reverently in their blindness, before closed doors. Perhaps when they do find a way forward, it may lead farther on than men have ever gone before."

"But — if they *were not* blind! The Door that is opened, that they do not see!"

"Are there not more doors than one? Are they not all of the same, — Divine, every one, if any? Why should they not go their way, to open more entrances?"

"How can they go without the light? Is it not the Marriage, — of sign and life, of matter and spirit, — to which the five wise entered in, and the five foolish were stayed from in the outer darkness?"

"Who shall dare to sentence wise or foolish, in that which none have wholly seen?"

"I am only sure of one thing," said Faith Armstrong's gentle voice. "Whether it is in myself, or whether it touches me from above myself, I know what I *must* believe, — what I cannot do without."

"Pardon me; but is that argument?"

"Is n't it as good argument as their's? Is n't it a true reaching, — a natural selection? Why not a law and a growth that proves itself, as much as animal development?"

"And the best belief," said General Rushleigh, — "Christianity; the 'survival of the fittest.' Is that anything different from the fulfillment of the true, — the coming of the Highest? I wonder if they thought of the etymology," he continued, "when they hit upon that phrase; or whether they spoke wiser than they knew? 'Fitt,' — a song, — a harmony; 'Fait,' — a fact, — a truth?"

Mrs. Armstrong smiled so softly, so brightly, upon the speaker! And her husband, standing close by, silent, — leaving the talk to these women and their insights, — smiled upon her.

"You lay your hand upon the keystone of the arch," said Miss Euphrasia. "The angel that stood with one foot upon the sea and one upon the land, was the living meaning of the Lord, joining the tangible with the intangible. If they would only mind, — if they would only get at the secret, — that they are *related*! That they cannot push a research into one without an instant flowing up of the other! That the very types they are finding are the types God talks by to tell us all! That there is a natural, *because* there is a spiritual; and that the sign, the out-

come of the one is the truth, the inmost, of the other ! Men have worked two ways, — in the world of things and the world of spirit, — as if against each other ; but there will come a last stroke, and it seems as if it were very near, when they shall find themselves face to face, and see that it is all one ! ”

“ They may ‘ come to know, even in this their day,’ ” said General Rushleigh.

Mrs. Armstrong finished it. “ ‘ The *things* that belong to their *peace*. ’ Is n’t that just the relation, Miss Euphrasia ? ”

Her name, then, was “ Euphrasia ? ”

Does not that mean, from the Greek syllables, something like “ good words ? ” I don’t know, except from the little prefix, as in “ eulogy,” “ euphony,” and the rest ; and from the “ phrasis.” When I get at “ Worcester ” again, I will look it out. You know I believe in christenings ; and, at any rate, I remember the little plant, “ eyebright,” whose botanical name is “ euphrasia.” It was believed to clear the sight ; and from what can the good words come, but from the clear seeing ? From what else do they come, on the lips of this sweet Lady of Peace ?

We sat late on deck. We dreaded to go down into the burrow. Edith said “ we should go right back into yesterday.” I did not want to bury Sir John Moore any more. So we saw the stars come out, and the moon rise ; we saw a great ocean space melt into silver under it. The captain had on his watch-coat, and his Scotch cap, and walked up and down with his soul in his ship, and no word any more for anybody. Only two or three beside ourselves lingered ; and we at last outstayed them all.

Do you know how the moon seems to move along with us overhead, when we travel upon the land ? Fields, and trees, and houses glide by and are gone ; they are things on the earth ; the things set in the heaven are always with us. At sea, there are *only* the things in the heaven to measure by ; you seem to swing up and down in the same centre of wide waters, — to hang in the midst of a forever which is forever *Now*.

And the moon keeps with us, closer, also, night by night, because we sail eastward, and move always to meet her rising.

She is perhaps half an hour later each evening, instead of an hour, as at home. We change our time twenty-five minutes daily; we go back into time, and live that much over. Has not that, also, to do with the spiritual sun-rising, and the "garden of the Lord eastward in Eden?" The more we move toward Him, the more our dear past shall live to us, — shall be redeemed out of the abyss? Shall *live to be* redeemed, some of it, that is not dear, nor tolerable now; that we wish were different; that we would deny and change, in our better growth and being, if we could stand in its moments as we are.

I think if a soul that has repented and turned away, were set back beside its own old wrong, it would feel blessedly its own redemption and forgiven-ness, by the utter unbelonging, and the gracious sorrow that would come upon it, as if it saw that some one dear to it had been misled. We may stand, our own pardoning or condemning angels, in that past which shall be present. Be that as it may, there will be one at whose shining feet we can lay it all down with its tears, and who will speak the "Go in peace" we wait for.

Will there not be many waiting so? Will any stand up, sure and strong at once, among the sinless? Will any have to shrink away before condemning fellow-eyes, when Christ that died and is risen again, sitteth upon that throne of his glory, clothed in a garment down to the foot, that the lowliest may touch the hem of, — girt around the breasts with his golden girdle, the faithfulness and righteousness that search out all and *make all right*, — his Face like the sun, and his voice like the sound of many cleansing waters? —

In His Glory! When the spheres
Lighten with that wondrous blaze,
How shall all my sins and fears
Meet thy dawning, Day of Days?

"Nothing hid!" No thought so mean
That to darkness it may creep;
Very darkness shall be seen,
Very death to life shall leap.

Nothing deep, or far, or old;
Nothing left, in years behind;
All the secret self unrolled:
Light of God! I would be blind!

Only I shall see a Face,
In the glory lifted up ;
And a Hand — the Hand of Grace
Whose sweet mercy held the Cup.

And a Voice, I think, will speak,
Asking of each sin-defiled,
Whom his saving came to seek,
As a mother asks her child :

“ Wert thou sorry ? ”

“ Yea, dear Christ,
Sick and sorry I have been ;
Wearily thy ways have missed :
Wash my feet, and lead me in !

“ Though in this clear light of thine,
Sin and sore must stand revealed,
Though no stainless health be mine,
Count me, Lord, among the healed !

“ Not with scribe and pharisee,
Dare I crave an upmost seat ;
Only, Saviour, suffer me
With the sinners, at thy feet ! ”

That little fact of longitude, that I always knew, now that I actualize it, opens such great gates of gladness ! A little moving *dayward*, on the earth, and a piece of the inexorable conquered ! Time, that devours, itself is eaten up.

I do not expect that “ time ” and “ past ” are any more at all to them who dwell in the celestial sunrise, what they are to us ; I do not suppose the years we count so sadly have anything more to do with their dear relations to us. Our life is not slow detail, and pain to linger in, as they see it. Neither can they forget ; there are no forgetting spaces.

I think my motherdie is toward me, just where she was, — whatever else is added, — at that last dear moment. I do not suppose she says as I do, “ It is eight years.” She is among the magnitudes and the glories ; where nothing is small or far away, and nothing — even the glory — close and outshutting. She holds far more, and she measures less.

The child, at school, lives out a whole existence of play-time and lessons in a single morning. The mother, at home, in her larger thought and work, feels hours as moments, and hardly a

breath of distance between the kiss she gave her darling for good-by, and that with which she welcomes her home at the noon-tide.

"It makes you realize your Geography, does n't it?" said Emery Ann, suddenly. "'The earth is a globe, round like a ball, flattened at the poles.'"

"Oh, Emery Ann! Your geography did n't say *that*!"

"They said it amongst 'em. I learned it here and there at the beginnings. But you can come out here and see it. 'You realize your geography, and — *more*, finally.'"

I knew she would sit here, and watch the "passing." It spoke great words to her also. The passing of the planet beneath the stars.

It was the next day that a little incident happened. There was a crowd of people under the awning, and it somehow seemed to spoil the sea-feeling.

A great many people, in chairs, talking about just such things as they always did on land, — only varied with a little curiosity when the log was being heaved, and the running calculated, or the captain came out with his sextant and measured the sun's altitude at twelve o'clock, — hinder one in seeing that beautiful "passing" which I was blessedly content to watch continually.

Edith and Margaret and I, got our chairs and wraps over at the side, under one of the boats that was laid up on great crotched supports above the deck, and found ourselves delightfully shaded from the sun, and with our own quiet out-look upon the sea.

How did we get them there, — all those heavy things? Why, you dear little land-bird, — or blossom! that is the beauty of it. You never have anything to lift or to carry, on ship-board; not even your shawl, if you are caught in the act of picking it up. You have only to stand up, and lay your hand on the heap you have emerged from, — it may be with ever so honest an intention of doing for yourself, — and straightway everything is grasped, and the folding-seat, clattering at all its joints, laid hold of, and you are asked by some man-kindly voice, "where you will

have it?" Men certainly fulfill their generic title with a perfect splendor on board the *Nova Zembla*!

It was General Rushleigh who hastened to us when we began our move. It does not need introduction, as it does on shore, for people to speak to each other, or offer little friendly service. We are all in one boat, and we have a human sense of it. The hour may come when one life or one death may be before us all. Universal relation is condensed into epitome, abstract goodwill becomes little practical kindness. Or, — the other thing may declare itself, as in all days of judgment, and pass visibly over to the left. But one is glad to look about and see how far, after all, the sheep out-number the goats in the dividing.

General Rushleigh placed the chairs, and helped us spread our shawls, and held them from blowing away while we seated ourselves with our faces waterward; and then he tucked us up, and rugged us over, and bowed and went away; leaving us, three beatified mummies, to the long delicious idleness, and the passive reception of the flooding, world-wide joy that surged upon us from bountiful sky and exuberant sea, — as we sailed, as we sailed!

Rose, — if I *could* give you one live instant of the ineffable pleasure!

Emery Ann was packed away between the binnacle and the saloon skylight.

A few moments later, two ladies came and placed themselves on camp-stools in the little corner by the companion-way, just outside the forward stanchion, or boat-post, behind which we were; (if I don't name things rightly, I can't be held accountable; I name them for the most part, as Adam did the beasts, — intuitively, at sight;) and, as they settled themselves, began, or continued, a busy chat.

The wind, that blew their voices right across our hearing, carried our own, — or would carry them, if we spoke, — pretty well away from theirs.

Margaret and I were nearest, with our backs to them; and as we sat quietly watching the blue rush so close beneath us, we began to catch, presently, scraps of their talk.

At first, we hardly noticed, and neither understood nor cared; but, directly, this came: —

"The eldest is exceedingly well married; and beside her fortune, which was hers by the will upon the wedding-day, I'm told Mrs. Regis gave her five thousand dollars as a gift outright. Now I say that was pretty well for a step-mother. Indeed, they say she has brought up those two girls splendidly. I'm not surprised, she was always clever. I remember her as a child, though I have n't known any of them since. She used to play dolls splendidly."

Margaret laughed low.

"I'm glad we do her credit,—as dolls," she said to me. "Are people to help themselves, I wonder, tied up under the keel of a boat? We can't move, can we? Or speak, that they would notice?"

The lady went on.

"The younger one,—the one who is on board,—I believe she's sick,—is rather more of a handful, I fancy, than Helen. My sister had a poor little governess once, who came from the Regises. She was a meek little thing; she said Margaret was a magnificent child, but she could n't manage her. There was a funny story about her getting her,—Margaret getting the governess, I mean,—up into the crotch of an apple-tree by some device, and leaving her there, helpless, with her book, while she ran off and took a whole half holiday with kittens, or some such nonsense. Nobody knew what had become of them till the gardener happened to find Miss Lariat up in the tree, and helped her down."

Margaret had manifested an annoyed and uneasy amusement during this speech. At its first pause, she turned her head upon the chair-back, lifted her face as well as she could toward the speaker, turned up a corner of her Shetland veil, and sent a clear tone across the distracting breeze.

"I beg your pardon! I am Margaret Regis, and the wind is this way! I *think* there has been a slight variation played somewhere on that little nursery melody."

It was perfectly ladylike, and good-humored, but a finality. The ladies laughed, but they must have felt uncomfortable. The speaker made the best of it, and showed society breeding.

"I quite resign the story to you," she said; "you certainly

must have the authentic version. Allow me to congratulate you upon being on deck. How lovely it is here, after the first dismality!"

"Thank you. We are enjoying it."

It was a polite, impalpable "leave us alone." Nobody could ever accuse Margaret Regis of rudeness; yet she was never hampered for a moment by a pretense; or cornered by an unwelcome conventionality.

"Poor Lucy Lariat!" she said to me, when the two ladies, finding their immediate occupation gone, had betaken themselves to a promenade.

"I always told her she was n't made to noose wild colts! I'll tell you about the apple-tree, Miss Patience. It was an irresistible May morning, and it got as much into Lukie's nerves as it did into mine. I *could n't* study! At least, not indoors, when my apple-tree — for it had a crooked branch, high up, that was my favorite seat — was full of pink blossoms, and the birds were building in the marten-boxes close by. I told Lukie that I'd do the history, — at least, I'd listen to *her* doing it, for she used to read it to me, — if she would come out and let it mix with atmospheric air as stupefying things ought to do. 'I'll not miss a word,' I told her; and she knew I always told her true. You see she was only nineteen, herself, to my thirteen, and so — she came. She had never lived in the country, and climbed trees, and I had some ado to get her up into the first crotch. And there she stuck, — she and Mrs. Markham. She was pretty comfortable, however; there was n't room for two; and 'sound ascends,' I told her. 'It's a great mistake about pulpits, that the preacher has to fire over people's heads; they don't do that at the opera.' So I hopped up to my perch, and began to keep my promise.

"How *could* I help it, Dixon's coming down the plank-walk from the house, with that covered basket? I knew it was my kittens as soon as I saw it. What did I care for King John and the barons? What were the liberties of London to me? The question of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was coming closer, to say nothing of the rights of property. I left Magna Charta where it was and instituted Habeas Corpus then and

there. I just dropped straight down through that tree, past Lukie and Mrs. Markham, and the camp at Runnymede, and fell upon poor Dixon like a shaft of lightning. He began to say, — ‘Mrs. Regis thought best, miss,’ — but I left him finishing his sentence, and before he could have got to the end of it, I had those little cats up-stairs in my room and on the sofa. I kept them there — and on the piazza roof — a month; of course they wanted a good deal of petting and pacifying after their kidnapping; and I did forget Miss Lariat for half an hour; and Dixon had gone off and she had to wait till John Frowe came up. But I know *she* never told the story as that woman had it. The reason she gave me up was because she sympathized too much with me, and she had a conscience.”

“Mrs. Regis has sent me, ladies, to bring you this basket of grapes,” somebody said, just as she stopped speaking.

Grapes at sea! Up went three thick veils, and round came three ecstatic faces. General Rushleigh stood there, very much as if he had been waiting several instants for a pause. Margaret’s color was bright with something, whether with sea air, or her own story, or the consciousness that it had been overheard. General Rushleigh drew up a camp stool, and stooped to come under our retreat.

“I am also commissioned to ask Miss Regis for a certain key to a square black box, that I may fetch a little chessboard. In half an hour, Mrs. Regis is to give me a ‘tour.’ Meanwhile, may we not make ourselves known to each other? I am Paul Rushleigh.”

“I think we do not need to be told who General Rushleigh is,” answered the old lady of the party. “I am Patience Strong, and this is Miss Regis, and this my niece, Edith.”

“Your mother has gone into the captain’s deck room at present,” he said to Margaret, as he seated himself, after bowing and taking my hand at my self-introduction. “She and the Reverend President are looking at some charts.”

There is a Reverend President on board, and he carries both things in his face. For that reason, Margaret has n’t patience with him, though I don’t see how he could really be expected to help it. He was once, I believe, at the head of a college,

not Harvard; and he is the first officer of ever so many literary and scientific associations; and being ex-reverend as well as ex-president, and counted on as a man of elegant leisure, is called to the chair upon public occasions, until he has a way of presiding everywhere, and perhaps has a trace in his general manner of something, which, when it descends to the vulgar extreme,—or as Dickens would exaggerate it,—may be called self-flunkysm,—a conscious *waiting* of the private and everyday personality, with a subdued and secondary importance upon the *personage* of occasion and fame. I think I have seen a faint refined touch of this here and there amongst our conspicuous men and women, and that a certain miasmatic seed of it floats, as it were, in the peculiar air of much of our American culture.”

Margaret shrugged her shoulders slightly, under her wraps. I saw a smile, as slight, curve the corners of General Rushleigh’s lips. He is a quick observer, this young military leader.

I think I catch a little laugh from you, Rose. Well, yes, I did observe them both; I do notice, myself. I notice *you*, you see, all this long way off.

We ate grapes,—sending some over to Emery Ann, who nodded back her thanks, and relapsed into a quiet bliss; and we fell into a chat about one thing and another, and I don’t know that anybody but me kept the thread to which joined a word of General Rushleigh’s, said after a little pause, and without immediate connection.

“I wonder if it ever puzzled you to think, Miss Strong, why it is that we cannot patiently allow anybody to be conscious of that in themselves which everybody is conscious of in regard to them? Why vanity is the last thing, almost, that we pardon?”

I did not answer instantly. I only smiled. It set me thinking somewhat. But Margaret Regis said,—

“I suppose because we know so well in ourselves the mean little thing that vanity is.”

Again General Rushleigh gave her a quick perceptive look.

“But there are persons,” he said,—“and I think these are apt to be most intolerant of conceit,—who, one would say, are too proud and independent to be vain.”

“That is just what they are vain of,” said Margaret. “That’s just where the creeping little thing gets under.”

She spoke with a perfect, honest disregard of inference or application, though she had just said, "It is because we know in ourselves."

"Well," said General Rushleigh, with an emphasis, "It is the *truth* sets free."

They were both too well bred to bring personal pronouns into such discourse, — indeed, it seems to me that Margaret Regis is too direct and intense, — too single-eyed toward the light, — to remember how her own face may show in it. But the little revelation and apprehension were as manifest to me, as if they had been saying "I" and "you." Certainly, according to my theory of introductions, these two were getting introduced.

"I have been in a bit of a metaphysical humor this morning," said General Rushleigh. "I think observations at sea are apt to become analytical. And I have been talking with Miss Euphrasia Kirkbright, who always takes directly hold of causes."

"That is the lady with the gold-gray hair?" I asked, eagerly.

"Yes. She is with the Armstrongs. That is, she has joined them since she came on board. They are old friends, and have not met before for a long time. They are all going to London together. Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong are also very old friends of my own. I have not surely outstayed my half hour? Here come Mrs. Regis and President L——."

"Do you think it fair to talk in great, smooth, round periods at sea? Where one can't hold on to *anything*, except by corners?" said Margaret, whimsically. "And don't you think it is uncivilized warfare to come down upon people where they can't get away? It is as cruel as pigeon-shooting," and she shook herself a little in her mummy-roll.

"Did you think I tied you up to come and pelt at you? I will atone as well as I can, by defending you from a second persecutor," said the General, laughing. "Mrs. Regis, I beg your pardon, I will bring the chessboard in a moment. Doctor, will you come and look over? I know you are an authority. We shall find seats, I think, under the awning on the other side."

And he took the key from Margaret's hand, and disappeared down the companion-way.

"I like that man!"

"This Margaret Regis is a fine creature!"

Do you think they came and said that to me, either of them? No, indeed, it is not likely! It came to me and said itself. You need not wait for the very words in your ear, to be confided in, or to get your share. You are confided in all the time, if you are alive to it. It is by a far more tender and inward way that a bit of everybody's piece is given to you. This that people call "living alone in the world" would be a bitter separateness out of it, if it were not so. If it were not for the "things accomplished" in the neighbor-lives that "are in the world."

But—dear me! why do I begin to talk of things accomplished,—only that every real instant is an accomplishment of itself,—because these two have met in this wise with an instant's understanding?

Why was nothing accomplished in my sympathies and intuitions when I saw Harry Mackenzie bid Margaret good-bye the other morning on East Boston wharf?

Yet sometimes there are only instants, to show what all life—that waits, a soundless, unawakened thing, like an untouched, unstrung viol, or lies heavily like dead, unvoiced air—might be!

An hour later, our two names were said for us to each other,—Euphrasia Kirkbright's and mine. When I heard "Miss Patience Strong" repeated after hers, it was with something like the thrill with which I heard in church, five-and-twenty years ago, Patience Strong "propounded" for the communion.

That afternoon we went and found a beautiful new place together, away out behind the wheel-house, where nothing but the slight-seeming curve of the stern-rail was between us and the stretch of radiant water that widened out between us and the home-land.

Emery Ann was in my reclining chair under the boat, taking a delicious after-dinner nap; the very thing she needs, and that is quietly filling her with a reserve of strength; and which she never would have taken at home, where there were dishes to be washed. How good it is that she is out of the way of dishes!

And so out of the way, that I do not believe she ever even thinks of them.

Miss Kirkbright and I sat quite still for minutes after we had spread our shawls and cushions and nestled down together. I do not know how she felt about it, but it did not seem to me that I cared to say any common kind of words to her. I felt as if something real were waiting, hovering; and I would not speak for fear of losing its alighting.

There is one thing you can never have seen, or dreamed, Rose; for you have never been in a great ship in mid-ocean. You cannot guess what it is like, — that radiant water that rolls its heaps together after you in the cool, pure masses of clear, beryl-green!

Away down, down, you see it, and far back; as if the urgent-moving vessel, with its whirling screw, were an angel troubling the deep into strange life and glory.

From the pearl-white, scattered particles just settling from the first foam-flash, to the grand, rich, gathered color where they bank themselves as it were on either hand in the aqua-marine splendor from which the jewel borrows name, it was a moving, shifting, voluminous effulgence, that told how the whole vast Sea is a jewel of God which He wears upon his finger, and which, from storm-darkness to the dazzle of white waves in the sun, — in all changes of amber and rosy and emerald and azure and violet, — spells out the hidden syllables of his mystical phrase of color, according to its instant pulsing, and the shining or shading of his Face of Light!

"What makes it so, I wonder?" I said at last; for it seemed as if I must ask something.

"To know that," said Miss Euphrasia, in a sweet, quiet, *thinking* voice, "one must know what the light and the water are; one must go back of mere mechanical reasons into the representativeness."

"Ah, yes!" I said, remembering "Thoughts in my Garden," and the meanings of the birds, that came to me also, just the same, because they *were*.

"I do not mean," she went on, "that we must look out an arbitrary dictionary signification. People do try to interpret so;

and perhaps they cannot go so far amiss as if they did not recognize or use the keys of things at all. But the sign octaves multiply and change their harmonies, as the octaves of music do. Just running up and down the scales is not entering even over the threshold, into the hidden chords and symphonies. The word is written in signs, but not in a secret cipher. It is put in the most direct of languages,—the showing of things; which men have only feebly and incompletely organized into syllables. What does water give you a feeling of? That is the question."

"It feels — of many things, as it has many forms," I said. "Of life, of truth and the eternal refreshing; of cleansing and satisfying, of surrounding, and inflowing, of answering and likeness, of pureness, of gladness; of might, that is fluid-gentle and awful as great floods; of everlastingness."

"And the light, that pours down into the water with whatever moves and stirs it, — that touches life and reveals it; that makes truth glorious to sight; that *manifests* the cleansing and the pureness; that makes the surrounding shine, and take a color; that interfuses the might with tender presence; that saves eternalness from being a blank, and fills it with live joy and glory; what can it be or signify, but the God-showing that quickens through all, and makes what we call truth the language and recognition between us and the Lord; the joy of his very thought, which becomes in us the joy of our understanding?"

We did not say any more for a little while; one does not speak out things like these as one recites a printed page. Miss Kirkbright spoke slowly, as it came to her, by degrees, to speak; and then, though we had scarcely approached what we had set in search of, we waited, and rested. And continually, before our eyes, the wonderful green light, born of the sun and flood, was rolling, playing, *speaking*; yes, "chanting aloud," had we the ears to hear.

"One little track, — one motion breaking a line through the great Deep. It is like a human living."

"And how beautiful," I said, "the things behind us grow, as the water parts away and drifts backward. How lovely and dear every particle, as we leave it!"

“And how *alive*!”

“But only for such a little way,” I answered, sadly. “Away back, it is all over; all as if it had not been. It makes me afraid, almost, of the meanings.”

“Why? Because we cannot look back all the way? What *is* all the way? Back as far as we seem to have moved in this infinite, — as far as we can trace ourselves, — it is all alight with the shine and stir; it is full of *presence*, — of *now-being*; it takes in every particle the color of hope, of livingness, of lasting.”

“It does not stay. Thousands of ships have tracked over the same spaces; and there is not any mark. And ours is vanishing while we are talking about it.”

If I had been speaking with some one else, — some one less than I, as Miss Kirkbright is greater, — I should have insisted on the hope which I believe in; I might have said, after my gift and way, just what she said; but I wanted her, now, to say it to me. I put forward my own questions, and let my own answers lie forgotten. I have felt so sharply, in these days of change and leaving behind, how my dear days *are* gone, and how the days that are to come, though they must live on from them, must be so different! In new, strange places, even; the breaking away from the very outward has begun; who can tell what it will go on to?

“No,” said Miss Kirkbright, in that still, sure tone of hers; “it does not stay, — the *sign* does not. The mere sign never stays; in our lives, even. That, also, is where the likeness is, — the meaning, that you are afraid of. It is only in the spiritual world that we truly live, now; or are truly anything to each other. The heaven and earth of the outward pass away continually; it is what they were made for; if they did not, we should be in prison. We only make one little sign at a time in the outward world, — the sign of the present moment. That is nothing, in itself, let it be what it may, or between whomsoever; a moment of greatest joy or greatest pain; it is nothing except for the past which has been, and the future which shall be, and which are both forever alive, like these live waters.

“What is our love and intercourse, as we grow older and the

circumstance of life changes, but a mutual reëntering into what has been, to join it with the word and circumstance of *now*; perhaps, also, to the word we wait and hope for. Our past is, — in the spiritual, — as much as our to-come. Blessed are the poor — of now — in the spirit which holds then — and *then*! Why should the gone-by be tangible, when the next moment cannot be? It is a great deal more real because we cannot touch nor see, but can only hold it, — *hallow* it, — as we do the Name of the Invisible! It is there, — where our future is; where *we* are, since we cannot rest in any instant; and *once*, — that sweet word which brings all to the blessed focus and point of promise, — once, we shall find them together!"

We let the silence fall between us. I did not ask any more; I could not then have taken any more.

I sat happy in what she had given me, and thinking what I say to you, Rose; that there is a very something of the Lord Himself about this Miss Euphrasia; something that makes you feel as if you could bring your empty pitcher to her feet, like the Woman of Samaria, and say, Fill for me of this water!

Yes; He still sends them out; there are always, at least, the Seventy!

It was, I suppose, because I felt that I had received my sacrament, and could not instantly return, that I spoke of something different, presently; the thing that first suggested. As we do, perhaps, when we turn away from the Altar. Only I think there is always a wonderful new humanness of sympathy in those next words, let them be what they may.

General Rushleigh walked up near, then turned and walked away again, ship-fashion. I spoke of him. I asked a question people are very apt to ask.

"General Rushleigh seems to me a fine kind of a man," I said, as we both glanced up, and back again. "Is he married, do you know?"

"No," she answered. "He was engaged once, — it is very well known, — to Faith Gartney; that is, Mrs. Armstrong. But the mystery of perfect choice was wanting, somehow, and Faith found it out in time."

"One would not think it need have been so."

"No; to see them now. But that was years ago. Both needed *leading*, then; and the woman, from her woman's need, discerned it first. It was the natural order; the man learned his, and found his answer, afterward. Paul Rushleigh says that life, dealing so strangely and suddenly with him, first confronted him with the living conviction that there was a Thought of Some One in his story, above his own. Some woman, now, may be waiting to be led by him. It was one of the divine hindrances; it is one of the single rectified points in the human tangle that *ought* to be, all through, a blessed righteousness. And *will* be!"

"Miss Kirkbright!" I said, ten minutes afterward, as we began to think of moving to rejoin our companions, "just one thing. Don't you think it possible, among all these parables, to make a wrong one?"

"Can you make a parable at all? Can you even be misled with one,—for I suppose that, rather, is what you may mean,—looking at it leisurely, all through? For a parable is a thing that must fit. We do not make,—we find it. It is there. Christ did not say,—'Listen,—I make a parable;' but—'*Behold* the parable of the fig-tree. *Consider* the lilies.' You may force and distort argument; you may turn reason into sophistry; but you cannot put into the creation types that which is not."

When we went back to the chair under the boat, we found Emery Ann waked up, and General Rushleigh sitting beside her. He had found her making a little fettered struggle to rearrange her shawls which the wind had blown about, and to regain her book which had dropped from her lap and slidden away. Then he had discovered that she would like some lemonade, and had sent for some, and remained at her side, talking with her. She was asking him questions about the war, and if he ever came across the Fortieth Maine, in which Penuel had been a lieutenant, and was wounded, heading a company, in the great fight before Petersburg, "when the mind was blowed up."

He had listened to the whole story, in which she certainly lapsed, through the firing up of her old pride and patriotism, into an uncorrected diction, forgetting the monitorship she could

hold over the more obvious points of grammar and elocution "when she tried" and "before folks;" but omitting nothing in the recital of Penuel's valor, which had been, after all, of the same genuine Down-East stamp as her honest speech; telling how he had been hemmed in with a handful of men in that terrible breach, and had shouted with his sword up over his head, "Now, boys! We've just got to cut our way out of this!" so that the nearest rebels flinched for a second at the sight of his terrible pluck, and he and his handful were among the few who got back that day into the lines to tell what the fight had been.

I think Emery Ann interested him; for he need not have sat so long by her, even out of chivalry to a plain, middle-aged woman such as some men especially have. But then, after the first kindness, why should not anybody be interested in Emery Ann? General Rushleigh has doubtless learned some values among plain New England soldiers in the face of deadly realities, which he might never have learned in Boston parlors, or even manufacturing in Massachusetts.

Emery Ann spoke out, after he left her. She could put in words, and was pretty sure to, that which had been a silence with Margaret Regis.

"General Rushleigh is a nice man," was her sententious verdict. "He isn't one of the sort that acts as if out-doors had got to be made bigger for 'em."

What was that I said about "things accomplished?" Here was another! What should I do if Emery Ann should set that "punkin" at him?

Do you think I troubled? Some things occur to one, and others not, — though the happenings and the showings be the same. I, too, you may perceive, think General Rushleigh is a nice man. It was the first thought I had about him. It is a comfortable thing that some women are forty-eight years old.

I dare say you think I shall never get you across the water, at this rate. If you had been with me on board the *Nova Zembla*, I do not think you would have cared much if I never did. But you see, I *am* across at this moment's writing; though my

story of over the way is likely to be like the light from the stars,—a long time reaching you from any given point. But what matter, if it keeps coming, and all comes? “Similarly,” to myself.

I shall go right straight on, as the real things carry or detain me. If I am a good while getting over, it will be because, as the blessed reckon, I lived long upon the sea. I may be a good while in some places here, where I *stay* only hours or days, but where I see and discern much; and very briefly in others, where my body may rest or be hindered for weeks or months. These last will be the catching-up places. There are such in the years we live. Perhaps my story will keep on telling, after I get quite back out of it all into the home corner at Old Farm; as the light streams on after the star is set or burned out. Will you not like it better so?

I think we often give our friends our mere tediousness, writing letters where we happen to find the time, and not taking the trouble to go back far enough or close enough, into the parts where we found everything but time. I would rather follow my own trail at a patient and careful distance. I will give you only what really makes a mark; what stays by myself, so that I keep it and remember it without note. There may be something like the difference between an auctioneer's inventory of a sale, and the things you really bid off and take home with you.

Mrs. Regis, too, liked General Rushleigh. It seemed quite fit that they should talk, and walk, and play chess together. They were certainly the most elegant man and woman on board; and she seemed to claim him on that patent suitability. I notice that elegant women, no longer young, are often seemingly aware that nothing outwardly becomes them better than the attendance and friendship of a younger man, of clearly and exceptionally fine tone and presence. There is a mutual gauge and recognition across a technical disparity; a reciprocal distinguishingment.

It came to pass that the sheltered place under and about the boat grew to be considered our place; our chairs were always put there. It was just aside from the promenaders, who might

brush against you anywhere under the awning that stretched across the middle deck. Mrs. Régis adopted it; discerning with that nice tact and felicitous foregoings of hers, that second best could easily be made the best; and liking, I think, a place of her own that was always tacitly acknowledged.

The games of chess went on here, and Edith and Margaret watched them. Then the two girls roused to a great desire to try for themselves, and the captain lent them a chessboard, and the boat-corner, with its daily group, grew to be called the chess club. Miss Euphrasia, and the Armstrongs and I, drew away quietly sometimes to the place behind the wheel-house, where we sat upon our shawls, and watched the water, and had talks together. Especially at even-fall, when the sun dropped away behind us, and the sea and the sky were a floor and dome of palpitating, interchanging color-splendor.

But I was speaking of the games of chess.

The young girls grew ambitious. One day Edith said to Mrs. Régis, when a great match was just ended between her and the General, and he had beaten the "three games of advantage" which had been contested for through some five times three of wavering majority since they began:—

"Dear Mrs. Régis, could you be benevolent enough to change partners, you and General Rushleigh, and take us for a game or two, for our good? It would only be sham-fight on your parts, I know; but if it would n't be *too* stupid?"

"Quite otherwise, my dear," was the graciously ready reply. And it naturally fell out that she took Edith for her own antagonist, and that General Rushleigh began a game with Margaret.

Perhaps it was just because his methods were scientific, and Margaret's were mere original inspiration, that she took him a little by surprise in the beginning of the game, and brought about what he declared, bending suddenly with fresh interest over the board, was a "quite novel position of things."

"Not provided for in civilized warfare, perhaps," said Margaret, laughing. "See what it is to fight with a red Indian!"

The glow of excitement and keen health upon her cheek, and the dark lustre of her brown eyes, and the vivid color of her

scarlet-lined hood that reflected itself warmly over all, made her a wonderfully pretty illustration, at the moment, of her own word. If I saw it, of course others did. The reverend president, who had drawn near and was looking on, lifted his eyebrows gently, and let his lips play significantly as he regarded her. General Rushleigh seemed intent upon his move. When he made it, it became Margaret's turn to grow grave, and give her whole mind to her response.

It was not to be supposed that her little unsophisticated innovations would disturb much, or hold long against the tactics of her opponent. They seemed to give a dash of unexpectedness, and to bring about some unusual combinations; but there was soon necessitated a brisk exchange of pieces, and the contest narrowed down,—if a chess-player would call it narrowing, when the whole field is thrown so open that every possibility in its entire range comes to be taken into the account,—to four or five pieces and as many pawns on either side.

But here, somehow, Margaret's native quick perception came in play. She managed an excellent defense, and presently bore down in her turn with a pretty strong pressure upon General Rushleigh's king, advancing a pawn at the same time toward a fair possibility of queening. •

General Rushleigh paused. Margaret caught her breath and waited eagerly for what he would do. He had his finger on a castle, quite engrossed with the immediate threat and the needful parry, when she suddenly exclaimed:—

"General Rushleigh! Do you forget my other knight over there?"

There was but one effective move for the castle; if he made it, the other knight might come down with a check, and a second move would bring him into the very heart of the General's forces, threatening all round.

"Why did you tell me?" he asked, looking up. "You might have had the game."

"I don't want it,—until it belongs to me," she answered quietly. "Of course if you recollected you would move differently."

"It was my business to recollect."

But he checked with his bishop, and provided by the move against the knight's advance. The next move brought down his castle, and a few more plays broke up the little chance of queening, and left a free opening for one of the opposite pawns to push on.

The game went against her.

"You gave it back to me, Miss Margaret. I was on the point of a blind mistake. I consider it a drawn game."

"I don't," she replied. "I did n't want you to make a blind mistake. The game could n't belong to me by hiding anything."

"Ladies are not often so ready to give notice of their 'other knights,' when they have a game to win," said the reverend president, jocosely.

Margaret superbly ignored the remark, though I saw an eyelid quiver, and her cheek and lip burned a shade warmer. She said to General Rushleigh, with the same simple quietness as before:—

"The beauty of chess is, that it can't be underhand. You can't do anything sily or in a corner."

"You certainly cannot," said the General, with a gentle, equal emphasis upon each word. "Shall we set the pieces again?"

After that, I think no day passed without their playing.

We were within two days of Queenstown.

I sat with my portfolio and pencil, going on with this long sea-letter, some dozen pages back. Margaret Regis was beside me, writing also. Almost everybody meant to send some line back from Queenstown. Edith was scratching away, girl-fashion, a little duodecimo volume of note-paper to her mother.

Margaret wrote rapidly for a while; then she leaned her cheek upon her left hand, while her right turned the pencil loosely, listlessly, between the fingers. She looked off upon the horizon, where a large ship to which we had dipped our flag half an hour before, was lessening as it sailed westward.

Her quietness, after a few moments, interrupted me. I set up an elbow, too, and rested my chin on the closed hand that held my pencil. Then my quietness turned *her* round.

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"Somebody told me once," she said, suddenly, "never to use great pieces when little ones would do. Don't you think people say that in a good many ways,—so that the big pieces get hidden away, though there are plenty of them, and you worry over the insignificant ones, because you are expected to use them?"

I knew then that she was writing a letter of little pieces, while the larger ones lay all around her, that she longed, yet shrunk, to touch.

"Yes," I replied. "Some people live a *life* of little pieces, because it is all that is expected of them. I'm afraid I am of a very wasteful nature. I always cut right into the whole cloth if I can get a chance."

"Older people may," said Margaret. "We younger ones don't dare." "What do you suppose we are set at patchwork for?" she spoke again, without waiting for an answer.

"When we might be making wedding garments?" said I. I was sorry, in a second, that I had happened to say that. The first look of positive pain that I had ever seen there, passed over Margaret Regis's face.

"I don't believe I shall ever make a wedding garment," she said, slowly, and almost as if she meant two things.

I told you it was n't a novel, Rose ; that is all I know, and all I may ever know, about it. Of course I could n't press her for any confidence, or lead her on, even, in talk. And though I do feel things, and catch dim answers far off, I am not Miss Euphrasia, to have the word out of heaven ready, always. I may have missed something here, of help that could have been given. We all do miss so many things. Emery Ann says, "An opportunity is like a pin in the sweepings ; you catch sight of it just as it flies away from you and gets buried again."

That night we sat up late on deck. We all gathered at the stern, upon and about the wheel-house.

We had passed several vessels and steamers during the day ; had signaled, dipped flags, and since dark sent up rockets. It is so beautiful, finding human life and sympathies thickening about us, making happy signs and greetings, as we come up out of the lonely waste that we had seemed quite separate in, and approach the other side. To-morrow, they tell us, we shall see land.

As we sat there, close to each other, in pairs and groups, we fell to singing hymns. Edith began it with a little low warbling to herself, which when she let define itself into the notes of the lovely "Shining Shore," Mr. Armstrong joined the words to, in a rich, strong baritone. And when it came to the chorus, —

"For oh! we stand on Jordan's strand,
Our friends are passing over;
And just before, the shining shore
We may almost discover," —

not a voice was withheld, not even mine, or Emery Ann's.

Then we had, — "I'm a pilgrim," — "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah," "He leadeth me," and last of all, Miss Euphrasia began that dearest, deepest, tenderest, "Nearer, my God."

I noticed Margaret Regis's voice all through the singing, as often as she joined, and I noticed her not joining. Sometimes she sang a stanza, — and her tones were thrillingly sweet and powerful, — then she dropped into silence just where the hymn was most beautiful, and when she came to that last one, she sat perfectly still.

Miss Euphrasia said softly as it ended, "You did not help us, my dear."

"Do you think everybody ought to sing words like those?" was the low answer. "I have not come to them."

Miss Euphrasia did not speak again at that moment, but I saw her hand steal quietly over upon Margaret's as it lay in her lap. Later, as a few of us still lingered, loth to leave that wonderful stillness between sea and stars, I heard her say, "I suppose no one can say 'Even though a cross it be,' until their own cross, and that which grows in the shadow of it, begin to shape themselves."

"Perhaps — until the shadow begins to fall behind," said Margaret. "The first threatening of things — before you are quite sure of the shape of them" — and there she stopped.

"One must not mistake the way," said Miss Euphrasia. "We need not stand in our own light, with aimless arms flung out to right and left, restlessly, and make our own shadow before us. Against that we have the prayer, 'Make us to have a right judgment in all things, and keep us evermore in thy holy comfort.'"

"We may have left that out — or never known it — till too late — I suppose." Margaret added those two words in a changed tone, as if she passed, or chose to pass, from earnest and personal to general and commonplace.

"Then there is another; 'Forgive us our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and deliver us from those evils that we most justly have deserved.' There is nothing that cannot be taken out of our lives, — in God's way, — any more than there is anything which cannot be given in. There must be pain, and waiting, perhaps; for these — the hymn."

Margaret got up and gathered her shawl about her to go down. "Good-night, Miss Kirkbright, and thank you," she said, as she gave Miss Euphrasia her hand. "You have given me something to keep. I shall keep it."

Miss Euphrasia leaned forward and kissed her.

We met General Rushleigh at the companion way. I think he had been watching for us. He took all our wraps over his arms, and helped us down the two little steep stairways, and went with us to our state-room doors. I stood in the entry of the lower ladies' cabin while he went with Margaret first, and gave up her things to her, and then rejoined me with mine. We crossed through the little saloon to my side of the ship.

"I leave you at Queenstown," he said. "I shall miss these days and evenings. We may meet in Switzerland, perhaps. May I look for you a little, if I find myself in the way?" Would you trust me with your banking address?"

"It will be 'Hoirs Sigismond Marcel, Lausanne,' for the summer. Later, when we go into Italy, we shall change it."

"Thank you. Good-night. It will be pleasant to think I have the clew."

And he left me feeling as if I had had the special part of the good-night, which my old maidenhood purchased for me, and which he had not felt quite free to give to Margaret Regis; or perhaps even to her elegant and still fascinating step-mother. I believe, after all, it is better to be treated like a friend, than to fascinate.

I was quite sure, though, it was not for me — to keep; neither was it for my gay, sweet, child Edith. She is taking her youth

as so few girls take it ; as if it were meant to be something in itself. She has always been so ; as school-girl, and girl just out from school, in that second lovely relation with her home ; with father and mother, with brothers and sister, and young friends ; with her old auntie, even ; with her books, her frolics, her music, her journeys, her daily sunshine. There is not much to tell of her ; she is not one to whom things are in a hurry to happen ; she just goes along, as the springtime does, which will be summer in good time, but you will hardly know just when ; and it is simply a blessing to watch her as she goes.

The gulls were so thick about the ship, all the next morning. Another wonderful, beautiful sign of the land we come to.

The white, winged things drift out from the far horizon which seems to our eyes far and wide as ever, though we know the shore is there, and their rock-nests. They poise and hover, and sail back and forth with us, as we press our heavier way through the yet deep waters ; and they bend above the deck, with dropped wings, and eyes that look with a soft eagerness into our own. They are like thoughts sent forth to meet us, taking form as we come nearer, even as the Spirit itself once took form as a dove.

Miss Euphrasia and I watched them as if they brought us news ; not of the coast whose headlands were so near, but of a farther. Not farther off, but more hidden within ; they were like apparitions shining out of the unsensed, where thought and waiting welcome intensified toward us until the very wings of their yearning flashed into light and hung above us.

Somebody near, not going very deep, yet observing faintly a typing in it, said, "how sweet it was, their coming out to us so !" And a voice replied, "They come for the scraps the stewards fling overboard."

"Oh," cried the lady, "how you spoil the poetry !"

It grated at first, that commonplace explanation which grudged the sign ; but presently we did not think it spoiled the poetry. We also have something for them, — why not ? Something they are eager for. They care for even the mere scraps we fling them of the life we scarcely think they have a share in. They want heart-crumbs from us ; they ask us to break

our bread with them. For that, as well as to tell us that the land is near, they lean above us with their tender eyes.

"Do you see the land?" people asked each other gladly, repeatedly. One pointed it to another, urging, insisting.

"Off there; just that blue haze on the horizon. Surely you see?"

"It is like a cloud. I can hardly tell whether I see anything or not."

"For all that it is the Irish headlands."

"I never thought it would come like that," I said to Miss Euphrasia. "So fine, so misty, so purple. It is like a shadow, or a dream."

They kept rising upon us like that, all day; faint points and shapes, looming larger, bluer, surer,—but always so soft, so spiritsofme! And the white birds wheeling, dipping, hovering, moving to and fro, continually.

Why did nobody ever tell us what it was like? I had supposed I should see gray rocks, and then green land; that we should come swiftly upon something defined and tangible, though at first indistinct with distance; but that this indistinctness would be so like the reaching and glimmering of an inward vision,—that it would wear, even as it grew quite close, such tender shapes and tints like twilight clouds,—that we should come to it as we come dimly to dear things of faith,—I had not ever set before my thought.

When it was only a blue haze, they believed; because eyes that knew had seen it; and the whole ship-company was alive and eager for the land while it was still only a shadow.

And we ate and slept, and drew nearer and nearer; and before night-fall of the second day, we had seen the cliffs and the softer hills behind them,—the trees and the moving cattle, and the growing grass!

It was all there, just as it was at home. Out of the ocean where seemed to be nothing, it had arisen, as they told us it would; and up and down the lonely waves, in the middle of that unchanging circle of far skies, we had been steering straight toward it all the time.

Not only that. We did not come upon it forwardly, as just to the end where something lay across; we moved alongside it, hours and hours, by night and morning, toward our harbor; right under the line of its soft, dim, outstretching strands!

I had laid up an expectation of comfort in the finding of towns, and forests, and Alps, and human living, over there,—after we should be there; but the comfort of the shining shore as we sailed upon it, and the way of its growing to our eyes out of the invisible, was a happy, wonderful parable that I did not know was, in all the parables of this beautiful earth.

It was midnight when we came into the harbor of Queens-town. Such a number of passengers was to land there, that a great many remained on deck to watch the departure, and to say good-bye.

Mrs. Regis walked up and down with General Rushleigh for quite a little while, talking. Margaret and Edith, and Mr. Armstrong, and Miss Kirkbright and I sat in the little corner behind the rail of the companion way, watching the tug as it steamed out and made a great sweep beyond us, and then came round,—the last thing it had apparently aimed at doing,—along that side of the ship.

There was a bustle of making fast, and transferring mail-bags and luggage, and it was some time yet before the real final call came to the passengers for shore.

It was very dark; only the lights at our own mast-head and upon the tug, and here and there upon some harbor craft, glimmered out their signals. It was not a cheery landing, I thought; I was glad we were to sail on to Liverpool. I had grown fond of the *Nova Zembla*; I had no wish to leave her until I had seen her voyage through, and she came safe to her mooring in the Mersey. I do not know whether we shall have Ireland at all; if we should, I felt I would rather take it by and by, and go the whole sea-way now, up the Channel, and into the great English port. I had no fancy for being dropped off by the way, like this, in the night.

“Then we shall be sure to see you again in Switzerland,” I heard Mrs. Regis say, as she and the General finally approached

us for his leave-taking. "We shall probably be somewhere about the upper end of the Geneva lake for several weeks."

Mrs. Armstrong had come up for a few minutes. She rarely stopped late away from her little children. General Rushleigh shook hands with her and with her husband, then with Miss Kirkbright and the rest of us.

"I have to thank you all for a most pleasant voyage," he said ; "and I am sorry that we are not to finish it together."

"I think we are all sorry to say good-bye," answered Miss Kirkbright.

Nobody said anything more. It was very much like all the other words of friendship and compliment that were passing around us. Perhaps the chief difference was that there was no reiteration.

Mr. Armstrong went down with him to the boat, and then returned to us. Mrs. Regis stood by the rail, her white hand with its shining rings showing in the dim light as she rested and leaned upon it, looking down where General Rushleigh came and stood on the low deck of the tender.

As the boat began to glide away, I saw a movement of her hand, — a half-lifting, as if she were going to wave a farewell, and then a quiet relinquishment of it to its place again. Not the movement, but the checking of it, struck me. Why should she measure, or reconsider ?

There was a great chorus of good-byes from a merry, frolicking party near us, watching off somebody else. In the midst of it, I saw General Rushleigh lift his hat, and heard him say quite strongly and clearly, as he looked up, while the moving of the boat brought his face directly beneath our own faces, "Once more, good-bye !"

One answer waited for a breath's space, while the others were spoken together, and then it dropped slowly, like a separate, final echo. It was Margaret's, who sat quietly beside me.

In the morning of that day, — I thought of it again now, as those good-byes were said, — we had been in the small upper saloon, enveloping and sealing our letters for this Queenstown mail. Margaret had sat beside me, directing hers, in the large, free, open hand I like so much. She laid them over, one by

one, as she finished, toward my side. Placing my own before me in like manner, I could not help catching at each glance the successive addresses of hers. It seemed as if she almost managed it that I should. There was one to her sister, Mrs. Vanderhuysen, one to another lady in New York, one to Flora Mackenzie, Boston, and, separate and last, she laid down one directed in full to "Mr. Harry Bernard Mackenzie, Holworthy Hall, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass^{ts}." She slid the little pile together, leaving this freshly written one on the top.

After a time, Mrs. Regis came in, to ask if we had letters ready.

"I just met Captain K——, and he has taken mine," she said.

"I have nearly finished," I replied. Margaret said nothing.

Mrs. Regis reached her hand toward Margaret's letters.

"Oh, you have been writing to the Mackenzies," she remarked quite carelessly and pleasantly.

"Of course," said Margaret, and then laid her own fingers upon her correspondence.

"Never mind now," she said ; "I will bring them all when Miss Strong has finished."

I was sure she wanted me to be a little longer, and so Gertrude got another little paragraph to her letter, and two or three acquaintances received by name some special messages of remembrance. I had already closed the thick packet for you, Rose, which gave you the first half of my long sea-yarn.

General Rushleigh came in.

There had been a promise of a final game of chess with Margaret, and I suppose she knew he would soon come to claim it. Mrs. Regis still stood by us, when he asked, as she had done, if we had letters ready.

"Miss Strong is just finishing," said Margaret ; "and then we have all these."

Her finger-tip, just touching still the heap of white inclosures, must have quite led his eyes to the uppermost name. I enveloped and addressed my last one, and Margaret, with a little gesture of "allow me?" gathered them all up, mine and hers, and gave them to General Rushleigh with the letter to Harry Mackenzie still upon the top.

"I am going for my thick jacket," Margaret said, rising, as went out. "I will come up on deck presently."

Mrs. Regis and I were left alone, and she just remarked to "Margaret is very fond of the Mackenzies. They have a friends from children. But I wish she made less demonstration of the intimacy as regards Harry. Conclusions may be drawn which will not be justified."

I knew she wished that they might not be, and I had felt she annoyed at first seeing that letter so frankly, if not purely, left in sight. I wondered if she would take the trouble to say to General Rushleigh what she had said to me. I wondered whether, with her great tact and cleverness at doing what she much wished in small matters, she might not have managed, in spite of Margaret's intention, to get between her and him in that little passage of the mail from hand to hand.

Somehow all this connected itself afterward with the manner of the midnight parting; with the half-lifting and dropping of Mrs. Regis's white hand, and the tone of Margaret's l-bye.

CHAPTER VII.

GATE-WAYS.

.... AFTER the loneliness of the ocean, how crowded and full of sign were the sparkling lights of the shipping and the city, as we came slowly up the river to Liverpool, twenty-four hours later.

Steaming up the Channel, we had been out of sight of land again. That had seemed strange, when we had once had the vision, and knew how near we were. England lying close upon the right, and Ireland on the left, and yet that round expanse and empty horizon, as it had been when we reckoned latitude and longitude in mid-Atlantic, fifteen hundred miles away! "They're only crumbs and crusts in the great, big porridge-bowl," said Emery Ann, without antecedent or connection.

"What?" asked Edie, wonderingly.

"Islands, and continents." Emery Ann was still realizing her geography.

The tide kept us below the bar. A custom-house officer came on board and took the ship in charge, but there was no examination of luggage, and no landing of passengers, except of a few individuals, by special management and favor. The prima donna went on shore, and took the four o'clock train to London; so did two or three gentlemen who had urgent business. The rest of us waited until morning, breakfasted on board, and then our trunks were hoisted up from the hold, and tumbled up from the state-rooms, and we stood by, keys in hand, for the ceremony of having them "passed."

It was not at all terrible. Tobacco, silver, books of English edition, were inquired for, our word taken, and our keys returned to our pockets; we made our first bargain with an English cabman, who at the outset named what we fancied rather

too American a price, and we appealed to a policeman. It was settled for us, with a warning to the cabby to "look out!" and we were then helped in with all civility, quite as if we had not refracted, and driven through the long, closed, quiet streets,— for it was Sunday morning,— with their many business signs of thoroughly English names, and their old, solid, smoky, English look, to the North Western Hotel.

Here we were next door to London; at the back gate, one might say; the railpath ran right forth from our under story, never swerving till it ended at Euston Square, in the very heart of things.

So here we stopped to breathe, and to shake off the ship-dizziness. We must stay over one day at least, to repack our sea-boxes, and send them down to the Cunard office to wait there till next year.

We chose our rooms as if we had been going to live there always. The girls ran back and forth from one to the other, comparing and exulting over advantages, along wide passages that looked magnificent to us after our bumpings to and fro in the dark little defiles between the lower cabins of the *Nova Zembla*.

"But don't begin to malign the dear old ship!" I said, the minute they triumphed in words over the contrast.

These girls were gay; they were full of the first delight of beginning Europe. Margaret took up her brightness as if she had sent it forward to await her here; there was a determination to have the good time she had come for.

She was only a girl, after all; the deeper questions might as yet be put by a while. Youth asserted itself, as the present and immediate assert themselves with us all, let our problems be what they may. It is only in certain story-books, I think, and in the morbidly-concentrated imaginations which they train, that life runs all on one thread, and if that breaks anywhere lets its pearls all drop apart and scatter hopelessly. We are not made so; there is a divine complexity in us.

I could plainly see one thing in Margaret Regis; she would either suffer or enjoy with an almost fearful intensity when her time fully came. An instinct of this had kept, and might still

keep her, from accepting into her consciousness the possibility and conditions of the one or the other. She would shut her eyes and stay in the safety of the commonplace, even when she had already caught some clear, unwilling glimpse of an experience that should grasp her whole being if she yielded to it, and involve her in its grander, supream pain or gladness.

Something that she was half afraid of in her own nature had perhaps moved her to refuse beforehand a more searching and entire probation, and commit herself with a negative content. She stood in her life as among splendid, terrible wheels, whose force might evolve an unknown end of beauty, but whose springs she would not touch, nor let her garments sweep against their rims, lest they move to drag her into their relentless whirl and crush her.

We said good-bye to Miss Euphrasia and the Armstrongs on Monday morning.

Miss Euphrasia was going to Manchester, on her way to London. She has a niece living near the former city, married to an English manufacturer, Mr. Robert Truesdaile. Mr. Truesdaile belongs to a good old family of gentry, though being the younger son of a younger son, who went to America before Robert was born, a rich maternal uncle has brought him here and adopted him into business, to make of him, like himself, a representative of that fine middle class of Englishmen, whose grandest types are in the grandest sense both born and made. It seems that his other uncle, the present "Squire" Truesdaile, married, as Miss Euphrasia told me, "a far-away Scottish cousin" of her own; so that there is a double connection.

The Robert Truesdailes and herself were to go on at once together, for a prearranged visit. Mr. Truesdaile, the Squire, is also a clergyman, and has two parishes, and two curates; one at the family place in the country, to which they are going down in the autumn, and the other in London, where, I infer from Miss Kirkbright, he is very busy among the poor. She gave us his address, and bade us let her know of our arrival.

The Armstrongs had decided to go directly up, and we all hoped to meet again at the great focus, before we *centrifugated* off again upon our diverse tracks.

On the Monday afternoon, some other people from the ship who were at the hotel, were wishing to make a party to Chester. Mrs. Regis and Margaret were going, and Edith came to all me of the plan. She was full of curiosity and pleasure, longing for her first impression of an old-world city, which everybody on the threshold of Europe goes to Chester for.

Somehow, for that very reason, — and because I was so tired with the strange fatigue, after the laziness of the voyage, which comes over one upon landing, — I did not incline very instantly to go.

"You can do quite as you please, you know, auntie; for I am going nicely with Mrs. Regis."

"Should you care, Emery Ann?" I asked. "Would you like to see the old walls, and the deep streets cut out of the rock by the Romans?"

"Well, I ain't very curious," said Emery Ann. "I don't believe I'm ready for Romans. I have n't got used to the English, yet."

She sat by the great square window of our larger room, looking out upon the front of Prince Albert Hall with its long terraces of steps and its grand façade, and the equestrian statues of the Queen and the Consort in bronze, before the gates.

"I'm watching those little ragged children chasing up and down, and dodging the policemen."

"I think I'm very much of the same mind with Emery Ann," answered Edith, laughing. "I want to see what comes along, for a while, and get used to the feeling of England."

So we settled it, and she ran away to Margaret, and her first sight-seeing.

Emery Ann and I looked out at the ragged children, and the policemen in their stiff uniforms and stiffer importance, dispersing continually, one swarm, while another, — or the same, reformed, — gathered at their heels. The splendid stone flights and platforms were only a playground for a grand game of "Old Man of the Castle," for which the cockaded and silver-badged officials served involuntarily and unconsciously as so many *Its*."

"They might as well try to parade the flies out," said Emery

Ann. "And flies do get the freedom of most everything, though they war n't thought of in the making."

Then we spoke of the simple bronze statues ; the slight, girlish figure of the Queen in her youth, with the long, plain riding-dress, and her husband in his uniform, looking so quiet and unimposing in the midst of the great space and before the lofty pile of architecture, — yet august to the feeling, as representatives of the personal Majesty of the Realm.

"Just that little woman at the top of it all," said Emery Ann. "You can't seem to see it, can you? But then you never can, in folks. It's the things that look mighty. And the crowds that stand round and call 'em mighty. If it was n't for all England, the Queen would n't be anything."

Which philosophy of relativity was as really Emery Ann's, as if nobody had ever discovered anything like it before.

Another of the world's questions occurred to her presently, under the same freshness of disguise.

"If a woman can be a Queen, why can't she be a President?" she said, problematically.

"There is a difference," I suggested. "She must be *born* to be a Queen ; but she must *scramble* to be a President : at least, until things are quite otherwise regulated than now."

"It would n't be a bad plan to have them born ; if you could make 'em up to suit yourselves, as the bees do," said Emery Ann, solutatively. "A real Queen-Woman, — with the horse before the cart, you see, — might be a first-rate idea over a congress. A kind of a national conscience, to clarify things ; that they seem to have most lost among 'em, some way, if they ever had it. But then, I suppose you could n't tell. A good one might run to crotchets — or quavers, for that matter ; and a bad one — there ! they 'll have to work it out ; I can't !"

CHAPTER VIII.

UP BY EXPRESS.

.
We stayed in Liverpool three days longer. Mrs. Regis had more to do than we, and we waited her convenience. We all bought new English waterproofs, and a few other things that we had left for foreign purchase. Edith and I indulged ourselves with some delightful traveling baskets. But we reserved our more thorough shopping for London and Paris.

You know that, in a general way, I hate shops. Christmas gifts, and choosing surprises for other people are the only things that ever put any poetry into it; so you will not hear very much about it from me. I will tell you right here, however, one conclusion I have arrived at, in case you ever come abroad yourself, and need to know. Don't listen to people who tell you to put off buying essentials until you get here. You will wish you had paid the difference three times over, and got it off your mind, to say nothing of the flies and fiacres you will pay for to fly round in.

I had not very much to do myself; for somehow, I can always cut down my list and go without things when I get discouraged; but Edie had a long memorandum to check off which her mother had made for her, under this traditional impression that it is a duty to start as ill provided as you know how to be, and to get quantities of all sorts over here. I am sure we have both been homesick for the old "stores" right around Winter and Summer streets, where we knew just what counters to go to, and what salesmen to ask, and exactly what he ought to "ask" us. The delusions that shillings and sixpences lead you into, as you first hear the prices of things in Liverpool and London! Not to speak of the pound as a unit, instead of the blessed, little, modest, yet warily-multiplying dollar! I can see, now, how our

currency came of the careful foresight of a prudent young people with its fortune to make.

You need to be in Europe a year to be able to begin to buy judiciously. My advice to any one coming is, — bring everything needful and comfortable : nothing superfluous, everything plain. Replenish as you wear out, and when you are just going home, get what you want for next year, and, — best and prettiest buying of all, — your little gifts for friends.

On the Thursday morning, we walked down-stairs and took our seats in the express train for London. How nice we thought the English first class carriage ! We do not mean to travel first class when we can do otherwise ; but we had our Cunard tickets through to Paris, and we could take our enforced luxury with acquiescent minds.

We had a compartment to ourselves, and as we sat opposite to each other in our deep-cushioned corners, the large windows giving us clear, broad views on either hand, we looked at each other and out at the new country, of which a whole day's panorama was to unroll itself for our enjoying, with the beatitude of children in the best places at the show.

The porter told us, with a touch of his hat, which meant half a crown, that our luggage was in the forward van. What secured it to us on our arrival in London, we could not conceive, for they give you no checks, they only tell you it is all right, and when you get there you find it is. There must be some system, and some check unseen, but what and how, remains a beautiful mystery, like the mystery of imponderable force.

How we gazed as we flew along ! And what a newness we saw in everything ! A newness of oldness ; there was nothing raw-edged ; nothing unmellowed ; nothing unadjusted, unutilized. There did not seem to be any dust, any scraps even, anywhere. All was finished and cleared up. England, it appeared, had nothing to do, now, through the centuries, but to live along in her dwelling that she has builded. The very brick walls, and the backs of the old suburban houses, were in charming tints of crimson and black and gray and umber and tawny, as

ime and the island atmosphere had colored them; there was not a crude, new-baked red among them all.

Over these rich, mingling blending shades ran the climbing, preading, live glory of dark green ivy.

"Just think," Emery Ann said, — "*English* ivy; that we end in pots so!"

"To be sure," said Edith, laughing, "for here we are!"

"I know," said Emery Ann. "But I was kind of thinking from over *our* way."

As the day grew on, we ran up into the lovely midland counties. Away from towns, the rail stretched through quiet meadows, skirted beautiful woods, touched the edges and lay long under the walls of fine old manor places and parks, where at some stately distance we could catch sight now and then of chimneys and gables that told of the home mansions, such as we have read of in bewitching English stories. Now and again, the girls gave a little shout, as real old castle towers revealed themselves against a wooded hillside, or upon the blue of the sky.

Still everything so perfect, so arranged; not a rough stone, nor a stray sod, it seemed, anywhere; the tiniest cottages, so tidy, — so "redd up," as the Irish say. Everything mellowed and smoothed and toned; no rawness, or straggledness. I knew we were traversing the heart and garden of England, the garden country of Europe; I knew that there are places where misery and squalidness reveal themselves; but I felt as Edith said, — "I'd as lief be poor as rich, here; the money is all spent for you, and the perfectness put everywhere." It seemed as if the daymakers in the field were like dwellers in a palace.

I thought as the swift train rushed smoothly onward, — This is what it has come to in a dozen centuries or so, of mere human outside improvement, — broken, as all human growth is broken, by tumults and oppressions, resistances and crimes and mistakes. What will it be in the Kingdom, when the Son shall come to his own again, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever? This, in the material, is what human living tends to; how surely then may we trust the Divine to complete itself? "Fear not, little flock;" it is your Father's good pleasure to give you all his glory!

The great Euston Square Station seemed big enough, and tumultuous enough, to be London itself. Carriages drove in under its arcades; the echoes of wheels and voices and the noise of unlading rung about us in the vast roofed space like the din of a battle; to look for any one in the thronging groups,—or groups of throngs,—might be like searching with a telescope along the Milky Way. With great presence of mind we remembered what the Liverpool porter had told us about the van, and we made straight for the point where we might expect to regain sight of our luggage. This was what concerned us; the rest took care of itself. The clew to all snarls, and the escape from all confusions, is the same; the reminder and application come with every glimpse we get of a bigger piece of the world and its ways than usual.

In ten minutes we had made our bargain with a civil cabman and his colleague, and in and upon the two vehicles ourselves and our impedimenta were bestowed, and we were rattling away from the already thinning pavements and platforms, and out of the subsiding roar, down George Street and along the Eastern Road.

Miss Kirkbright had given us some nice references for London lodgings, and we had telegraphed from Liverpool and secured rooms at Mrs. Blissett's, out toward Kensington; so we had quite a bit of a West End drive to get there.

How pleased we were with the names of streets and squares, roads and crescents, familiar to our novel-reading! Marylebone and Hampstead, and Tottenham Court Roads, Park Crescent and Portland Place, Upper Baker, and Upper George, and Upper York streets, Berkeley Street, and Portman Square, and Oxford Street; at last into great gates, and along green, shaded avenues, across a corner of Hyde Park itself!

It was just after the fashionable hour of driving; cabs are allowed a certain license then; and we caught sight of drifting fragments of aristocratic splendor as one gets scraps of sunset in late, marginal clouds. Or, as Edith said, as you get in among the asteroids in the edge of the November drift. Equestrians, especially, were returning from the Row, and gentlemen in private cabriolets were driving by, with little breeched and

beavered and cockaded tigers, their small arms folded tightly across their chests to hold in their big importance.

Something began to puzzle me presently. Nobody really stared; but I was conscious that we were glanced at. Eyes scanned swiftly the windows of our humble conveyances, and were lifted to the laden roofs. I could not suppose that simple travelers and their luggage were of noticeable interest to these great world people, even when pretty American faces beamed from within a railway cab, and the unmistakable "Boston, U. S. A." was ticketed atop.

I wondered if *we* were staring conspicuously; at last, when a gentleman, whose wheels passed our own very closely, really leaned involuntarily forward for an instant, and drew quickly back as he met my eyes, I felt annoyed, and admonished Edith to sit farther out of sight.

But we forgot it all as we caught sight of the sumptuously delicate Albert Memorial, lifting its white pinnacles and sculptures out of green shadows against blue sky; and passed out at the Queen's Gate into Kensington Road, in face of the grander structure of the new, magnificent Albert Hall. Ah, me! A queen can raise a poem of marble and gold, and build a hall to fill with glorious music, in memory of her beloved; but she cannot go away into the hush she craves, and sit in the sweet twilight of her own remembrance, and keep the quiet widow's garments on, and let the years grow holier as they run toward the end of her waiting, as other widowed women may! Yet one thrills to think that though it demand impatiently its Sovereign, and her robes and pomp again, her people never can forget, — and these monuments stand forth to say so, — how she has been a very woman with a woman's heart among them, and how the grief that falls on common homes has anointed her in her palace also, to make her more sacredly their own than any coronation oil!

CHAPTER IX.

SHOPS, OR SHRINES?

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. . . . WE five had two whole floors at Mrs. Blissett's. Our parlor looked out with three windows upon a shaded crescent; at the back were wide gardens such as we had never dreamed to find in London.

There was a table ready when we arrived, with tea and biscuit, and cold chicken; and a dish full of such wonderful strawberries as we had never seen before except in Horticultural Shows, or in two round rings on the *tops* of fancy-price boxes. We had to cut them up to eat them. Emery Ann said it was the way with all the rest of it; we should find we could n't take anything at a mouthful.

We went to sleep, in broad, delightful English beds, thinking of a great feast spread out all around us, and that to-morrow we should begin to cut up London.

Not that we should cut it up at all small, this time, or even get a really fair taste of it; we were in a hurry for Switzerland before the season should be too far gone. We only meant to stop in London long enough to buy basket trunks and some other indispensable things, get a little rested, and see Westminster Abbey, for fear we should not live to come back. Since we had known Miss Euphrasia Kirkbright, I had felt much the same about seeing all we could of her.

Should it be the Abbey, or the Edgeware Road? Should we get our errands done, and then go with clear brains and consciences, and serene imaginations into that dim, silent Heart of the old Past, which it was so strange to think we could step into, right off the busy, crowding, whirling streets, — right out of a modern cab into doors through which kings, for long ages

witless of our age's cheap multiplied facilities, entered to be crowned, and were borne to be buried? We wondered if it would seem solemnly separate to us, as it had used to seem to our thought,—now that we knew how easy it is for any and everybody to trip across the Atlantic and run in?

The questions came up at the breakfast-table, where we were also reminded that the Exhibition of the Royal Academy was open, and that one of our days must be given to that.

"Could n't we do both to-day?" asked Mrs. Regis.

"Westminster Abbey and — anything else!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

Mrs. Regis smiled.

"Is that the way you expect to economize a year in Europe?" she asked. "I think you'll find you'll need the 'cycle of Cathay.'"

"And I think it would be a better thing," I said; "if we must make mince-meat of Europe to get it all into one little indigestible pie. I am going to try to enjoy each separate doing, as if it were the one single thing I had come for. I would rather wait a week between, than put two together that don't belong, or that rub each other out."

Was it very rude of me? I don't think I made it sound so. We decided upon Westminster Abbey.

The girls got out the map of London, and chose the way we would take.

"You won't mind driving by Buckingham Palace the same day, will you, auntie?" said Edith, saucily.

"We can't help driving by things," I answered.

"Then we'll go by as many as we can," she returned, and I only stipulated that she should not take us round by Greenwich Hospital and the Crystal Palace.

We drove over Constitution Hill, between Green Park and the Palace Gardens, and down into the Mall, and around Saint James's Park; and we thought we had seen residences more delightful than the Queen's town-house looked to be, and were partly disappointed, I suppose, because we could not detect the subtle difference between the stone and mortar that shelters royalty, and that put together for other and freer dwellers; also,

I think I was conscious of a feeling too absurd to define, that she never sat with her work at the windows, or stepped carelessly in and out of the doors before the breakfast-bell rang; and if not, how queer it must be, and what were windows and doors in a palace made for?

The low, long ranges of the buildings at Whitehall, — the arched entrance of the Horse Guards, with the two immovable beasts and striders, on sentinel duty; then the showy and glittering architecture of the new Houses of Parliament; and then turning aside from these last, the dark-browed, solemn Abbey — this was the way we came to it.

I cannot take you in, Rose, if I try to. I could not take myself in! I was there, and I was not there; just as we are in the midst of Almightiness, and we know it, and yet know it not.

Arches beyond arches, opening through and through, crossing and interlacing above; crowding chapels and shrines; pillars and galleries exquisite in far distance with groinings and fret-work; old, worn, massive thresholds, and door-posts, and lintels; pavements uneven, yet smooth, with the tread of centuries; hushed chambers and crypts, where still, strange effigies lay; long, aisled chapels, rich with carving, and marble, and stained glass, — hung with old banners, and silent like the buried years; names of kings, and queens, and heroes; weird symbolic devices, — Edith stopped aghast before one of a husband leaning over his dying wife, while from the door of a sepulchre beneath, the skeleton Death starts forth and aims his javelin upward, — inscriptions of love and honor, adornments of gold and brass, engraven and sculptured escutcheons, trophies and relics of arms, — a world like this, lying shut away within the noise and stir of the every-day world of the living, — the memory of a nation hidden in a heart-stillness behind its present, as every separate human memory is hidden; — it was in this we strayed and lost ourselves, and wondered, and came surprised upon things we had not known how to look for, and missed the things we thought we did; and it is in this gray mist of a grand, bewildered vision, that I grasp at shapes and parts to try and tell of them again to you.

We climbed the narrow, twisting stairway to the Chapel of Edward the Confessor ; we stood before the quaint, grim Coronation Chairs, one of which incloses the Stone of Scone ; we looked up above them to the sword and shield of Edward Third, — the sword seven feet long ; we saw the legend on the screen, — of Saint John, and the king, and the ring, and the pilgrims, and I thought of the circle that all acts run round in, and so of the way a ring comes to be a faith and service token, — since every doing is an unconscious pledge, of which the sign comes back and is redeemed at last. And we remembered that the royal dust that lay hidden about us in the antique chamber, was the dust of five, and six, and eight centuries ago, — and that we, standing there, had brought in, on feet and garments, the dust of eighteen hundred and seventy-three. It gives one's breath a gasp, and one's brain a whirl, to put the two together, and to fetch one's self back to the consciousness of which world of the two one really belongs in.

We went into the magnificent chapel of Henry Seventh, through the wrought brass gates. The marvelous carvings of stalls and wainscots and canopies, the overhanging banners, the walls with statues of saints and martyrs, the high, intricate groinings overhead dropping to long, slender points like stalactites, the dim, rich light through painted glass, — oh, Rose ! I am falling into what I said I would not, — a sightseer's recapitulation. Yet what can one do but capitulate, and recapitulate ?

It came over me here, on this first threshold of wonders, — what I have thought and known beforehand, — how impossible it is to really see it all, in the sense of grasping and taking in. It has to be done in strata, as the geologists take the rich old story of the earth ; you can no more enter into the detail, and appropriate the separate meaning and impression, than you can unravel the primeval periods, and make the swarming life that was lived in them individual and distinct to your imagination. And after all, that is why we are kept graciously, for the most part, in our own place, and have not been given wings. And it is by being kept so, for long times together, that men have made a history upon the earth. For if the corals had been swift-moving things trying all ocean depths and places, and getting

their living far and wide, it is easy to see that reefs and islands would not have been built up. This is a drifting and a flitting age; but much will have to settle down again, even if it should be by the dropping out of some of our knowledges. The Lord will not let his work stand still or snarl up, by his separate weavers leaving their little threads and spindles, or dragging them heedlessly about, as they run hither and thither, just to see what the whole, as far as it has gone, looks like.

I will tell you just three little things, and then leave off.

We found the North Aisle, and the tomb of Elizabeth and Mary. While I stood looking at the splendid monument of the queen sisters, Emery Ann went down to the far end, where is the altar above the remains of the murdered princes, Edward Fifth and the Duke of York. I thought it was that she was gone to see; but it seems she knew nothing about it, and I found her standing over the little effigy of a baby princess, lying in a cradle, with the record of its three days' life upon the stone.

"They lost their little babies, out of their cradles, just as common folks do now!" she said, tenderly. "It seems realer than all the crowns, a hundred times!"

Afterward, we crossed to the South Aisle, and went in where Mary Queen of Scots lies sculptured in white marble, — turned to a pale amber with age, — beneath the softly stealing light of two high windows.

I sat down on a bench, opposite the light, which shone faintly through the chiseled features.

Two little street-children, as they seemed, had wandered in, and came and stood there, close between me and the tomb, and gazed up at the marble lady.

"My! ain't she pretty?" said one, with hands folded before her, and her voice hushed down.

"Yes," said the other, shaking his head slowly and wisely. "But she's been — *dead* — a long time!"

Last of all, we got into the Poet's Corner.

Somehow, it looked more open and plain, — less sweetly secluded, less of a *nook*, — than I had imagined it. As we all stood on the broad pavement, glancing around for the names

that make it beautiful and separate, Edith said, in her quiet way:—

“Poet’s Corner is n’t *just* what I thought it would be, auntie. Is it to you?”

And Emery Ann, who knows so precious little about poetry, as a name, that she does not recognize that which she makes in her own homely speech, said briskly:—

“I suppose it is n’t the *Corner*, after all. It’s the poets.”

Was n’t that nice?

When we reached home, we found two cards and a note upon our table.

The names were “Miss Kirkbright,” and “Lady Christian Truesdaile.” The note was to me from Miss Euphrasia.

“I write,” she said, “in case, as is so likely, that we should not find you. We wish to see you very much; and my cousin, Lady Christian, begs you will, if possible, arrange to drive out here to-morrow, for afternoon tea. The place is not quite easy to find, so I shall come in for you at four o’clock, if I do not hear otherwise from you in the morning. We hope to see you all: Mrs. and Miss Regis, Miss Tudor, and Edith, —who I hope will let me call her so; and that this will be only a beginning of our being much together. You will only need one fly, for coming or returning, as Mr. Robert Truesdaile has a dinner engagement in town, and the carriage will be sent in for him at ten o’clock. Our own dinner — or rather supper, for we have Scotch names and fashions for many things — will be quite quiet and plain; we mean to make less guests than friends of you. With love, EUPHRASIA KIRKBRIGHT.”

Was n’t this lovely? And how *had* she known that we had come?

And so, the “far-away Scottish cousin” was a ladyship! I will just mention here, — for we soon ceased to think of it as of consequence, when we came to know the *woman*, — that she was Lady Christian Shawe, Lord Bervie’s daughter. How many American women, I wonder, would have talked to us of her friends as Miss Euphrasia had done, and never once let the tid slip into the *mention*?

Mrs. Regis had made another engagement for herself and Margaret. I think Margaret was sorry ; but I am pretty sure that Mrs. Regis would have been just a little unwilling to sail too readily into intimacy with a Lady Christian, under convoy of me, Patience Strong. She had not drawn much to Miss Euphrasia on board ship ; and perhaps it was quite becoming of her not to be too eager now.

CHAPTER X.

IN LADY CHRISTIAN'S GARDEN.

.
We used the first half of the broken day to do our errands in the Edgware Road. We went in by the underground railway, found an omnibus at the corner where we were to alight, and were set down at the trunk-dealer's, where Edith and I bought each one of those large, light, elastic, canvas-covered sket-trunks that we coveted, to replace the heavy, iron-rimmed, zinc-bottomed, batten-roofed American boxes, whose only strength is their fragility in the remorseless hands of American baggage-heavers.

We walked about a little, — not too long, for we were on our guard not to put our whole day's strength into our forenoon, — before we took the return-omnibus to the station corner, and were steamed through the great Metropolitan Burrow around again to our Kensington lodgings. The shops and the people amused and interested us. The "getting used to being in England" was enough in itself to fall back upon in the intervals of more definite purpose.

We came upon some little street-children again, who gave us the point of the morning's sensation in a specimen of English street-grammar.

They were playing about, a group of them, bareheaded, untidy, and happy, when a rather fiercely busy-looking woman, equally untidy, and far less happy, put her head out at a doorway and screamed a summons to the "young 'uns."

It was a crowded thoroughfare, and there were other young ones. Those near us, whom we imagined were addressed, and among whom perhaps the woman took it for granted her own ways were, paid no heed. One of them, in a hunt-the-squirrel

chase among the quieter pedestrians after a companion, tumbled up, or all around, against poor Emery Ann, who extricated herself with many collisions and dodges, and then remarked admonishingly, "Your mother's calling you."

A bold, saucy, merry little face, the eyes shining out between wild elf-locks, turned itself up at hers, and a voice which was the translation of the look into tone, uttered triumphantly this remarkable distich:—

"Her ain't a callin' we! Us don't belong to she!"

Which has taken its place with us, ever since, among Familiar Quotations, and become a typical aphorism.

We found letters from home when we came back to lunch; letters, that not giving *their* experience across the ocean as we have done, were only the record of a few days after our departure; as many as we had now spent in England. How odd it seemed that there was so little to tell! And, how dear and delightful that the little had come!

I should have supposed that you could not have asked me a question, Rose, about voyage or anything, that the many pages I have dispatched would not be bearing an answer to; and I laughed so to find the two things demanded which I had not thought to tell of, and which seemed so far back, now, to recollect, "whether we *did* put half our wardrobe through the port-holes," and "what became of the popped corn!"

My dear, if the port-holes were what we gave the name to, — the little round windows in our state-rooms, — they were hardly ever left open, all the way; and the popped-corn bag was popped under the berth in a corner, that first miserable night, and never thought of or discovered until, crushed with tumbling among other movables, and shrunken with sea-damp, it puzzled us to remember and identify it when we dragged it forth in the general investigation the day before we landed. The steward carried it off and I suppose the sea-mews and the fishes got it; but I have conscientious doubts whether it agreed with them; and I hope the bundle of cast-off garments that we left tidily pinned together and begged Mrs. Pride to dispose of, may have done some brief and better service. I have lost faith in private sea-stores, and in the handiness of port-holes.

Edith and Emery Ann and I drove out with Miss Kirkbright in the Truesdaile carriage. We passed high-walled parks and gates with names of noble houses on them; we read also hundreds of little fanciful titles of suburban villas and cottages and terraces; we saw everywhere that lovely adornment of flowers, in windows and balconies, — that bubbling up of greenery over garden walls, — which redeems and transfigures smoky London; which was not half so smoky as we had fancied it, and that smiled upon us everywhere, these bright July days, with a generous surprise.

We turned down by the river along a shaded mall, and crossed a bridge, under whose arches boats and little steamers were shooting gayly up and down, and we came out into quite rural spaces. We still kept on by the river side, with gardens and houses all along our left, and streets leading away into more thickly-built precincts.

At last, before an iron gate that opened upon a path between sweet bits of hedge and patches of blossom, at whose end a flight of broad stone steps ran up to a pleasant veranda, looking down, as you turned, upon the river, and a boat-mooring, and a water-gate beneath old trees, — we stopped at "The Shaws," named partly for patronymic, and partly for winsome meaning of the old Saxon that stands for "shade."

The doors stood open through the hall. The rooms to right and left were breezy and bright with the western sunshine, gently shaded by the nodding boughs; trees and vines showed soft, flickering motion and cool color across the wide garden egress at the back; and Lady Christian herself came forward from the foot of the staircase to welcome us and lead us in.

She took us into a long drawing-room cosy with books, pictures, music, — low sofas, and foot-rugs upon the dark, inlaid floor, — curtains pushed back to their utmost from a great bay window that looked down into a garden full of vines and evergreens and tenderer summer foliage whose groupings made seemingly endless avenues and glades, and hid away the real confines utterly; from among which, now, came up the voices of children and the laugh of young girls.

"They are all busy down there," said Lady Christian. "We

are getting ready for a little *fête*. Perhaps you may like what we will tell you of it well enough to come again and make part. Meanwhile, would you keep your hats on, and come out? We will have tea there, if you fancy."

Do you want to know what she is like, to look at, this Lady Christian?

She is a little, slight lady, with soft, quick movements, and a way of vanishing quietly like a spirit, and appearing noiselessly somewhere else where she is just wanted; never needing a place made for her, but gently gliding into one that waits; she has bright brown hair which she pushes carelessly from a fair, low, even forehead, and gathers up behind in a loose, graceful knot; and she wears upon it, almost always, — not a cap, nor a veil, — but some white, light thing that looks just flung on, now of lace, now of wool, delicate and film-like, as she flits between house and garden, and needs less or more of dainty covering. It is never arranged; sometimes the ends are just caught together under her chin, — sometimes, with a gold or coral pin thrust through at the back, it lies about her face and throat making its own delicate folds and shadows, changing with each gentle stir and pose.

But you do not see the whole of Lady Christian, as you may of some, by just her height and face and mould and color, and by the garments she puts on outside of these; subtly as these reveal the inward creature, according to the law by which God surely gives to each seed its own body. You want to see the raiment of her life about her; the way she has made the body and vesture of her home; the sweet attitude in which she stands with husband, children, friends; the moral and spiritual grouping; and all in the light from that eastward quarter in Eden, which is the shining of God's face upon his heaven. The heaven that has no other boundary, but lies here and there in hearts and households and societies, wherever the Kingdom has begun to come among the worlds. As one color shows upon the map, in scattered fragments, the territory and dependence of a central realm.

I do not suppose I shall ever see or know her any more in this world, or that she will have anything directly to do with

what you have begun to be interested in with me, of life and story that this year may link together ; but she is in it, — therefore she has to do ; and I think there will be a certain finer line upon all things and places, and a certain truer perception in ourselves, than we should have had but for this beginning of showings. I think it may be something like the beautiful and gracious “beginning of miracles” in Cana of Galilee.

We found the young people in the middle of a rehearsal of a little domestic play which Lady Christian and they had arranged, and which was to be a chief part of the coming *fête*. So we did not interrupt them ; only Hope, the eldest girl, came down and greeted us while a scene went on in which she was not needed ; and we went and established ourselves just out of ear-shot, in a farther glade of the deep old garden. Here we found chairs and rugs and a little rustic tea-table ; and here, after a little while, Mr. Truesdaile, with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, came and found us.

There is this certain truth in spiritism ; that a “seance” is something, arranged consciously or not, into which inevitably flow the life and manifestation that belong to it. There are persons whom I never saw but twice — three — four times, yet who touched so surely every time, the self-same chords in me, that no different tone of intercourse would have been possible than that which came, almost like a Holy Communion ; and there are others again with whom I am afraid I should be little, and earthly, — be kept, and help keep them so, — though we were thrust in each other's way — I will not say we met — every day of our lives.

In Lady Christian's garden, that fragrant afternoon, there was a circle, and the spirits came.

It had begun in Mr. Truesdaile's library, where he and the Armstrongs had been sitting before we got there.

The world is all alive with it, to be sure ; it is in the air both of religion and science. I do not think we can say which “began it ;” if one had not, the other would. It is a new grasp, a closer perception ; and the first prophecy and advent are like the prophecy and advent of Bethlehem. The wise men are eager ; the Herods are scared ; the hearts that are virgin to

the truth, and of which it may be born, are in travail and pondering. The shepherds, guarding their living treasures by night, waiting for the day, hear heavenly voices; and in the desert, growing and waxing strong in spirit, there is a child already, — the child of a stern, judging Truth that shall be the world's awakening to its need, — waiting for the day of its showing unto Israel.

A new reach and message through the things that are the types, — a last word sent back from the farthest advance, and farthest discovery of material exploration and analysis, — this was what they talked of, as people are talking everywhere.

"They have almost touched heaven, and they do not know it," said Mr. Truesdaile, as they walked toward us and we caught a key-note to the conversation.

"Protoplasm is very near to God; and yet they will never reach Him by that road," said Roger Armstrong.

Our shaking hands and making places did not put by, or break up, except for the moment; we were all so quick to catch and to desire. Nobody even explained, "We were speaking thus and so;" or entreated, "Pray, go on." It went on, because it had to.

Miss Euphrasia said to Mr. Truesdaile, —

"It may be lost again, — that clew you were talking of. Is the world ready to read the sign? It is as simple as the Rosetta stone; but nobody sees how the pictures of things are the initial letters of great words."

"It has been lost before. Do you suppose Babel was a round tower up into the clouds?"

"It may quite easily have been another sort of reaching."

"'Go to,' they said; 'let us make brick; let us put this and that together, and pile hard fact upon fact, with cunning mortar between, and we shall come to the sky.'"

"And then," said Lady Christian, "they fell to talking different tongues. Nobody knew the *one* language. They forgot it, among them, in their cunning building. So Babel crumbled, and men began again."

"Now, they are climbing a hill of sand," said Faith Armstrong. "It is not even a brick Babel, this new way of it."

They have sifted the worlds down to particles, and made a kind of Sahara of the universe."

"Where the shapes and drifts are nothing but chance shiftings of wind-blown grains, and the beautiful things we hope for are only a mirage of the hot air," rejoined her husband.

Said Mr. Truesdaile, — "They disintegrate, to find out that which is the secret of compaction. The livingness is in the living rock. It goes out by their own process, which after all they cannot push to literalness. Nobody ever saw an atom, any more than they see the Spirit that holds the atoms together. Yet they will believe in the one, and say, 'Who has ever shown us the other?'"

"Was not that, too, in the parable told nineteen hundred years ago?" said Miss Euphrasia. "Building on the sand, and building on the rock? The holding to mere elements, which fall apart, and the holding to his saying, which is the Word in the world?"

"Still," said Lady Christian, "is it not his hand upon the world, after all, to open its sight? When He healed the blind man, He took clay, — the lowest thing; and he made an ointment with spittle, — the most literal proceeding from his mouth, sign of his most inferior material word, — and anointed the shut eyes. And at first, when the sight came, it was not to see men even as men; but as *trees walking*. Are not the wise ones looking at humanity just so now? But the second touch — perhaps the crumbling away of the first anointing — showed all things clearly."

"You have taken the truth out of two parable-acts, Lady Christian," said Mr. Armstrong; "but you have mingled, and perhaps not mismingled, the stories."

"Ah, yes," said Lady Christian, smiling. "I recollect. There was the blind man of Bethsaida, and he of Jerusalem — born blind."

"And He led the one *out of the town*, away from human confusions, and there made the clay, emblem of first things; and after He had anointed, bade him go and wash in the pool called '*Sent*.' It was as he went, according to the sending, that his sight came."

"And the other," went on Lady Christian, "in the midst of the city, close by its very temple, touched with spittle also, began to see, dimly, life in its lower relations; the men as trees. After that, a higher quickening revealed the higher. Surely it was not without meaning that he did it twice."

"I have never yet, said Mr. Truesdaile, "found any question or solution of question, that was not prevised in the New Testament."

"I am so glad it was called the 'Testament,' " said Miss Euphrasia. "The perfect Will, — the clear intent, — the complete bequeathing. We are like children of a vast inheritance, only coming to it as the needs come; opening out treasure after treasure in truth, as we do in the heart of the globe, as the life demands it."

"He fed the multitude twice," said I. "I mean, with the same repetition of circumstances, so that we easily confound the two. Certainly He healed many blind and deaf, and raised many dead, no doubt; but we have these few doubled, like a saying underlined. There were Lazarus, and the boy of Nain; how those two stand together, in the hopelessness and the weeping, and the 'beholding of the glory!'"

"The bier and the tomb, — yes; the very last and uttermost of death; twice shown, that the people might see — two different throngs of them, in Judea and Galilee — how 'God had visited his people.' And that, by the mouths of many witnesses, the word of immortality might be established."

"I think," said Mr. Truesdaile, as Mr. Armstrong paused, "that we have more nearly the whole of these ministries in the record, than is apt to be imagined. And I would rather believe that there were no more. For if Jesus had literally swept all pain and death from before his presence, wherever He went, and as long as He lived upon the earth, we should not have learned the other side of his mercy that He came to show. There is as true a comfort in his leaving unhealed, — in his letting the dead be buried, — as in his turning back of sickness and mortality. 'This sickness is not unto death,' He says; 'this death is not unto the grave;' — when He 'abides still in the same place where He was,' letting our grief and pain go

on. He manifests forth the love and the might that can deliver, that we may know what the love and might must be that suffer things to be so now. That we may be sure of the ordering and appointing. 'That no man may be moved by these afflictions; for we know that we are appointed thereto.' So He gave his own body, and suffered the last; though He might have had twelve legions of angels."

Miss Euphrasia's quiet voice repeated,—"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom."

Tea was brought out on trays, by two nice maids; and the young folks, with "Cousin Amy,"—Mrs. Robert Truesdaile from Manchester,—came trooping down from the little open-air theatre, hungry with their long rehearsing.

Over the tea-cups, while we dropped in sugar and cream, we asked Miss Euphrasia the question which had come up in our minds many times, with great curiosity, but had not yet been asked and answered; "How in the world she knew so instantly of our arrival in London?"

"I might make a mystery of intuition and affinity out of it," she said, laughing. "But the truth is, a friend of ours saw you in the Park."

"One of the Nova Zembla friends? And who?"

"Not at all. Somebody you never saw. Young Mr. Eckford, Sir Harry Eckford's son, who passed you as he was driving home to dinner. We were there that evening, and it all came out at table."

"It is a stranger mystery than intuition!" cried Edith, making great eyes. "What can you mean, Miss Kirkbright?"

"If Mrs. Regis were here, I think I would hardly venture to tell you; but you will enjoy the joke just as we did. It was your luggage,—yours and hers."

I thought of the big letters, "Stuart Regis, U. S. Army," and the *advertisement* of it; and I felt myself color a little before the eyes of these reticent, undisplaying English.

"It was such a funny coincidence," Miss Euphrasia hastened to say. She was so quick to see the little danger signal.

"And Percy Eckford is always picking up funny things," said Lady Christian. I'll tell you another, presently, that this reminds me of. I beg your pardon, Cousin Euphrasia."

Miss Kirkbright went on.

"He came in with such a grave face, and made no real conversation for several minutes. Then he said suddenly, — 'Has anybody heard that the Tower of London is on fire? I don't mean that I have,' — for everybody started. In these days of conflagration one is not surprised to hear that the Rock of Gibraltar, or the Egyptian Pyramids, are burning. 'It was only that I could n't think where all the things came from that I saw being moved across Hyde Park to-day; unless that was it, or the Queen was fetching home the family plate and jewels. There were two cabs, — I thought *cabs* were odd, under any supposition, unless of fire, — and on the top were boxes with the most portentous marks! In the first place, there was "V. R." itself. I just glanced inside, and I *did n't* see Her Majesty; then there was also "Stuart," and "Tudor," and the Latin possessive of "the King" sticking out on a corner; and the biggest box of all, — iron-banded and bottomed, — had "STRONG" upon it in black capitals. I assure you it's very much on my mind still; one can't help thinking of fire, or abdication, or revolution, you know. But the streets are quite quiet; and the only *other* thing that occurs to me is that the North Western Express was just in, and probably an American steamer had arrived at Liverpool.'"

Miss Euphrasia has a little of the English accent, — or as they claim it, want of accent, — herself; and I could quite imagine from her repetition, just how the young gentleman had toned and inflected it; and quiet fun is really a great deal funnier in the leisurely rhythm of such speech, than in our square-chopped Yankee.

Edith was the first to stop laughing.

"But it is positively horrible," she said. "How are we to go over Europe with such ticketing as that? At least, the Strong-box is to be kept in London; and I've only 'E. S.' on my railway basket."

"It would n't matter much on the Continent," I suggested.

"There is n't any separate Continent," she said ruefully. Americans and English are all over it."

"We can't hide; and we can't take — otherwise," said Emery Ann. "But if it will do any good, I can leave off the Tudor."

"And be signaled 'Emery Ann?'" I asked; at which, fresh amusement.

Do you see how safe Emery Ann is not to overstep her certainties? She was not clear about the accentuation of "alias;" it she knows the common sense of it, and she used that; and common sense, as it sometimes does, became a piquancy.

"Please tell us the other thing, Lady Christian," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"That Percy Eckford saw? Oh yes, — it was this. He came into some town, once, upon the top of a stage-coach. He had the box-seat, and had been chatting with the coachman, who pointed out this and that to him as they rattled along. That's a good place for a chapel, ain't it, sir?" said the man reaching out his whip toward a tabernacle building that fronted the main street between two shops. Over one of these was a sign, 'Evans, Tailor;' and on the other, 'Watson, Chemist.' Why so?' said Percy. 'Don't you see, sir?' said coachman, solemnly. 'Evans on the one side; but — *Wot's* on the other?'"

"That reminds me," said Mr. Truesdaile. "In regard to our Hastings plan" —

"Don't be hasty, dear! I've one or two plans before that," returned Lady Christian.

"I was only thinking of the fancy mail-coach. Would n't that be a nice idea?"

"As if there could be any possible nice idea that mamma hadn't already set by in her own head, papa! You do so let it all the delicious little pantry-secrets!" said Hope Truesdaile, who had brought a garden chair beside Edith, and was making a closer acquaintance than I had expected from a home-educated English girl, not "out in society." But then Hope Truesdaile is — Lady Christian's daughter.

"To-morrow," said Miss Euphrasia, turning to me, "I hope

you can go with us to the Academy. Have you any other plans?"

"Nothing that cannot be adjusted to it," I answered. "We are not marking out a campaign this time; we are only *'en route.'* So that everything which befalls without planning is just so much pleasure of the better sort."

"Then let it befall that we all meet at Duroy's, in Regent Street, and have a little lunch," said Lady Christian, "and then go to the Exhibition."

I think I gave myself up to a more resigned enjoyment of the evening from that moment; seeing that there was to be yet another day. The *only* bit, or little taste, of anything very delicious has always a certain pang in the flavor; which is, doubtless, the moral of bitter almonds — in reverse suggestion.

I cannot tell you all the bright, home-y, scrappy talk that followed, Rose, as we lingered in the garden into the twilight, and the young Truesdailes and two or three friends who were helping them "do" their little play, discussed stage situations and difficulties, and begged advice, and got Lady Christian's criticisms, and enjoined on Cousin Amy, who was prompter, the necessity of clear cues at certain points where they were "sure to forget;" the little consultations about tables, and attendance, and the places for guests, who were to be in greater number than usual, because the Truesdaile garden party has grown to be an annual interest with many who care for the good rector's work and plans and the connection with them of this festival; Lady Christian's modest explanation of how it was, and that Miss Clairmont's London tenants were the real honorary guests, but that their own intimates, and some whom they were only intimate with in the cause, — and she mentioned two or three very high names of noble ladies, — had from time to time begged in; — all this, the letting of us into their home life and its lovely expansions, I cannot tell you minute by minute, though the skipping of anything seems like a selfish non-sharing.

You cannot imagine how nice that eight o'clock supper was; not hot and stuffy like a dinner, nor weary with course after course; but such a pleasant setting out together of savory and fresh and delicate and enticing; from the roasted chickens and

the pink ham and the smoking, powdery potatoes to the fruits and jellies that shone and sparkled up and down the table in crystal dishes, among the vases of flowers, with such adornment of light and color-grouping.

And the life of the house that gathered round it and contributed itself in wise and sweet and bright variety, from Mr. Truesdaile with his grand, gentle face and ways and words, down to the littlest one, — for they have no nursery dinners here, — who ate contentedly his two kinds of the simplest, and chattered over it in a happy, unobtrusive fashion that disturbed and interrupted nothing, any more than a brook or a bird does, — was all just like the supper; I would rather call it the *repast*, for I like that word with the intensive particle, which makes the food something more than feeding.

In all things, I think this household life realizes its types, and makes them sacraments of the blessed verities. That, too, without any cant; not even the cant of anti-cant, to which some excellent people swing over in these days, making a business of their genuineness.

I am in danger of talking about it as much as if I gave it all, word by word; but, indeed, I doubt if I find anywhere beyond, much that will be better worth while to dwell on.

I will skip abruptly to the next morning, and the Exhibition. Or, — I will begin there, when I next sit down to write.

But I must put in what Emery Ann said after we got home, about the "Word-and-the-philosophers" talk, that she had listened to in her unassuming, keen silence.

"It's a good thing that the Lord has put his own cornerstone under creation, and we don't have to wait for their round towers, — that some of us might n't ever hear tell of. I'm glad I was born into a world where there was a Bible, — instead of a Babel, — ready-made; any way, I *was*, whether I'm glad or not; and so were these wise men, that it appears to me don't pick up the best of their facts, after all's said and done. There's facts at both ends; they won't get 'em all out of the crumbles. A man's a fact himself; and his very inquisitiveness. If thinkin' *comes* of it, it stands to reason thinkin' must have *gone* towards it. If there's soul at the tail end, there's

Soul at the beginning. It's the first and the Last, and the Almighty has said so."

"And he took alphabet-letters to say it by. All the world-word lies in that parenthesis," I answered her.

"Likely." Emery Ann's New Englandism had its own sententious reverence. "For, — come *to*, — there is n't so much as any little nut-meat that has n't got a whole tree in it."

Which is also the parable of the mustard-seed and the kingdom.

CHAPTER XI.

A STRAW.

EAR ROSE-NOBLE, — There must always be dates and
 as; by them you know present whereabouts and safety
 but that is all you will know except as I come to it
 along. If I wrote a letter of to-day, I should fall to
 out all the yesterdays, and presently to not writing at
 ope do, because it is hopeless to write the whole; and
 ld get now and then some generality, not even glitter-
 a string of wretched little excuses and more good-for-
 assurances, instead of being kept beside me all through,
 n you shall be, on this unique line of letter-writing, if it
 all the summers that are left to me to do it in. I
 l see the sense of saying a lesson "skipping about;"
 ndeed, the multiplication table.

ret and her mother went with us to the Exhibition.

my first experience of a great gallery of pictures; and
 back upon it from even this distance of time, those bril-
 ls of paintings, with their manifold subjects and styles,
 a magnificent confusion in my memory, and I should
 ard enough to give you an idea of what I saw; so that
 7 I shall gladly fall back again upon that a part of
 was; the more, as it brought me, by a chance hap-
 nto a little nearer understanding than I had reached in
 as yet, with this proud, peculiar, interesting Margaret

such nonsense to go to a place like that, to see it as a
 nd only once. It is something to come to London and
 the season for, and visit every day; spending your hour
 or three, with the *thing that stops you*, and then taking
 7 home with you, and putting it away.

I shall get cross, continually, I feel sure, with heterogeneous sight-seeing; grabbing at things by the bushel, and feeling them all slip through the mental hold, like a big handful of smooth beans through the fingers!

But bating the crossness and the crowd, — and the crossness came afterward, — I had a pleasant time; and I have a general dreamy notion of lovely glimpses into deep woody nooks full of flickering light, and shade, and green repose, — of wild, stormy, cloud-swept mountain solitudes, — of shining beaches, and waters rippling in the gold, and rose, and purple of dawn or sunset, — of rocks and foaming breakers and heeling ships, — of sweet home-scenes and quaint “interiors,” — of exquisite child-groups and faces of beautiful women, — of thoughts, and stories, and fancies, sad or bright, put down on canvas with the play and attitude of a moment, — all shifting before me and replacing each other like the turning of quick leaves, as we walked through the splendid ranges of rooms, taking the ten in long slow order, that yet seemed foolishly brief, and coming back at last into the Central Hall and Sculpture Gallery to rest and gaze among the marbles.

It was when I went into the long room a second time, to look for some picture there, whose title struck me as I reviewed the catalogue, but whose title proved, as I thought, to be the whole of it, after all, — that finding Margaret Regis and her mother there, I sat down by them on the divan; and that Mrs. Regis leaving us presently, Margaret and I overheard a bit of conversation that was just like a page or two of talk out of a certain sort of English novel; which yet, in the midst of its absurdity, touched Margaret in some keen way that made an expression flash into her face, and drew from her a sudden exclamation, that told, — like these picture-titles and picture-glimpses, — almost a history in a glance and word.

The speakers, — or the speaker and listener, — were two elderly ladies, — a stout and a thin one, — of dowagerish aspect, who came and sat down beyond us and at our backs, just round the corner of the long oval. Middle-class dowagers, — at least the head-gossip must have been such; for though she talked like a woman used to something like society, and in pretty

fair English, yet in the excitement of her subject she did occasionally gently slip an "h," and then catch it up hurriedly in her breath, like an "'h' to carry," and tack it on to another word instead. It does not sound so vulgar as it looks when written, unless in harsher aspiration than she made; and you must take my underscorings, not for vehement emphasis, but for an otherwise indescribable pointing of the cadence; and you must remember the little poise of inflection, — it is hardly rising, — at the ends of the phrases; and the rippling recitative of the syllables between. That is, if you would hear it as I heard it, which was the beauty of it.

"Ned is *reely-but-a* boy, you know; *only* twenty; and Amy *is-but* sixteen. It's quite *settled-they're-to-say-nothing-about-it-for-six-months*; and the Westmacotts *were-to-have-taken-Alice-abroad-to* school; but Amy's *gone-instead-for-the-six-months*, mind you? *Quite* out of the *way*! But *before-they-were-off*, fancy, there *came-up-the-picnic-to Netley*; and Mr. Smythe got an invitation for *Ned*; — he *came-to-me in such-igh* spirits about-it! And he *gave-her-a magnificent locket*! *H'eight guineas*, you-may-know-it-was magnificent! And he's *quite-sure*, and-content-for-the-'alf year. I've no-doubt-at-all that *Ned* will be constant; but I'm *not-so-certain* of Amy. If she sees *anyone-she-likes-better* on the *Continent*, she'll be married, at *once*. It's a *very-very-excellent* thing for *Ned-to-be-sure*; for her *mother* had *thirty-thousand-pounds* to her fortune; and there-are-the aunts *beside*. And it's *all* to come to the *children*; so its *all-right that-way*, don't-you-see? — Ned was always a fellow of *very-igh* h'aims! — It's no-*secret*; it's *quite-well* known in *S'thampton*; but you'll *just-if-you-please*, not mention it from *me*?"

They got up and went away, with that; and I turned to glance at Margaret, and have the fun of it out with her, when it was not fun that I saw in her face; but that flashing, indignant expression; and she said under her breath, and with her eyes shining straight before her, —

"So they take English girls abroad, too! I wonder what the girls 'abroad' do about it, when it comes to them?"

"Stay," said I. "And get tired of Ned, in the natural course of things, perhaps; — sometimes."

Then her eyes turned full at me, and a little spark of the indignation leaped from them into my face.

"*Tired!* What is a person's word for, then?"

"My dear! Is that all, — against getting tired?"

"It has to be enough, I suppose, after people are married."

"Precisely. And just because of that, it is not half enough to get married *on*. It is n't — 'I have given my word, and so I will be your wife;' but — 'I will love you better than all the world till death do part us;' yes — 'till death join us again!' The first is only a pledge, under human conditions, which often remain to be tried, — of a regard which thinks it can make the promise, some time."

"And it has got to be made. A girl has no right" —

"Put it the other way. What would you think if he — anybody — were to marry you just to keep his word? Would that do? Would that be true *enough*? Would he have a right" —

"He might do a meaner thing," she interrupted.

"I wonder if I said too much?" I asked Emery Ann. I was so uneasy in my mind about it afterward, that I had to tell Emery Ann.

Nobody knows what that woman, with her honest, simple, unbewildered common sense, is to me sometimes in what she calls "hard spots," in the way of clearing my convictions.

"It is such a responsibility to take, to touch such things at all," I said, faint-heartedly.

"Patience Strong," said Emery Ann, "sometimes I do believe you've got a crazybone in your conscience! What else could you do? You was spoke to plain, and you answered back the truth."

"As well as I knew how. But you may be mistaken in the way the truth will work — on feelings. What is truth for one, may not be *the* truth for another. You don't know what you may do. You may put a straw across a trickle, which will turn a river another way."

"And you may leave the straw *unput*. You've got to take the responsibility, either way. I hope that did n't stop you."

"No. I said all I had a chance to."

"Another time you'll have to finish."

"If the chance comes."

"Of course. You can't make that. That is n't your business."

CHAPTER XII.

THE DISCIPLES TO THE MULTITUDE.

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THE day of the garden party at Lady Christian's was the last day of our stay in London. It had been settled that we should all go down to Hastings together, where the Truesdailes have taken a house for a little while, with Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, who wished to spend some weeks at the south sea-coast with the children.

Some of Lady Christian's servants were to go down by the early train next morning, and we were to come after by the fancy mail-coach to Tunbridge Wells, and thence by rail.

What days these were, Rose! How came they to be made in the world for me? It makes me think of all the possible combinations that may make great gifts, any moment, of our daily bread. The people, and the places, and the little turns of happenings, held in God's hands, like mysterious numbers, that may count up and multiply so many, many different ways! Why, it is plain force of calculation, that we have neither seen, nor heard, nor had it enter into our hearts to conceive, the things He has laid up, and may bring to pass, — even now, here, to-day, to-morrow. Living on is a great wonder. The time coming is fuller than the time that has been.

But — the straws we lay, ourselves, across the trickles! We need have crazybones in our consciences, that we don't shatter ourselves against sharp corners that He never set for us.

I think, now and then, I am having too easy, too good a time. That I have laid out too long a holiday from the living in earnest that I thought I had taken hold of. And I believe it troubles me too, confusedly, to see as I move out into the world how much doing there is in it which has not any direct ap-

pearance of that living in earnest to accomplish some heavenly work, which I, in my hushed little corner, thought ought to be the mainspring of everything, the aim of every right-minded Christian person every day.

Here, at Lady Christian's, is the true life, the life of faith and helping, made a business of ; but such motive points, so distinct and few, showing in the great working sea of human struggles and purposes and pleasant pursuings, only manifest the stir of the leaven in the three great measures, and you are tossed back in your mind upon the question, — If it were all leaven, where were the mass ? and must there not needs be always a "face of the waters" for the Spirit of God to move upon, separating the light from the darkness, and so evolving the heavens and the earth ?

I suppose the Kingdom will come, when the mass is leavened ; when there needs not any longer be a special ferment anywhere. The new heavens and earth shall be established, when the firmament shall be set in the midst, to divide the waters from the waters, so that they which belong above shall be lifted up, and they whose place and purpose are beneath shall be gathered together, and the rising and falling shall be the eternal demand and giving again which is the play of the Divine Will in the human condition, the rendering of every tribute in its due order, and He shall see that it is all good.

I suppose we need trouble less about *the* true life, measuring and condemning by contrast, than just to live, meekly, *a* true life. It takes a great many lives, in a great many different ways and places, to make a world. It takes many phases and alternations, of work and holiday, week-day and sabbath, sad and bright, calm and intense, — much mixing even of spiritual and natural, — to make a single living. Perhaps we must leave The True Life to God, who overlooks and moves throughout the whole ; and be blessedly content, ourselves, to be but particles, sun-drawn into his heaven in rapturous mist, set in his cloud and shining with his glory for a token, or dropping down into his deep in rain. Yes, — or just glad and rosy for a while with the morning, or floating in calm, white rest upon a clear blue noon, or waiting in a violet peace as the night comes on.

I think I will not worry about the easy time that befalls me in his order.

Mrs. Regis was beautifully dressed that afternoon at Lady Christian's. Her thin black upper dress was of the most delicate, yet firm, silk tissue, woven in such a sheer, light web that the rich, heavy robe beneath showed all its costly splendor; the camel's hair shawl which she carried into the garden upon her arm was of wonderful fineness: and the very narrow border of Indian needlework which relieved its plainness was such a piece of handicraft and such a combination of dusky, deep, softly blended color, as is rarely, I imagine, got away out of the East for any European purchaser.

She knew that the Countess of L—— was to be there, and the daughters of the Marquis of W——; and I think she was conscious that if any stranger — and there were a good many guests invited as we were, who were new to the house and to each other — were to look about, fancying curiously who might be of the *noblesse*, she was quite as likely to be taken for a countess as anybody. I am sure she walked down the path and took her seat with a supreme, unostentatious grace which might have become a duchess.

Lady Christian begged us to make ourselves quite comfortable. A few ladies were already gathered near the front, and Mrs. Regis, who led our party, moved, after the greeting of the hostess, with precisely that unassumingness which is conscious of nothing to assume, toward a row of chairs a little withdrawn yet sufficiently forward, and placed herself at the end, against the shade of a low-spreading, heavy, dark-leaved evergreen.

Margaret, looking lovely in a pale blue redingote over black silk, came next; then Edith and I, and Emery Ann, who found herself quite out in the middle, and presently, when a light cloud had drifted over, in the full shine of the afternoon sun.

I wonder if it is wickedness in me, which saw, or felt, so plainly, this *tone* of Mrs. Regis's, and divined how and why she took it, while it sat so native-easy upon her; and discerned the instant discrimination which led her with that quiet and indifferent grace, to what I saw upon careful survey, was the very preferable and choice position in the whole auditorium?

There was the little apparent disadvantage of being far at the side, and behind several rows of people; and of having to lean slightly around a projecting branch to get a perfectly unobstructed sight of the stage,—which redeemed from obvious selfishness; but as the other seats filled up, and hats and parasols were bobbing to and fro in each other's way, and eyes were politely blinking in the dazzle that they could not be shaded from without incommoding too entirely the general view, it became quite plain that she had chosen with a most wise modesty, her little sheltered nook. Her clear, pure outlines, and her white, fine cap showed, too, very artistically against the deep-green, glossy foliage.

She leaned past Margaret, and reached me a large, handsome, garden-screen, "for Miss Tudor." It opened round, with a tilting spring, which made a perfect shield, and inconvenienced no one. I had a fan which slid upon its stick and made a semi-circular defense for my eyes, and Edith wore a hat with a pretty little dropping brim, so that Mrs. Regis satisfied herself that we were none of us suffering, and took her own scrupulous comfort accordingly. Certainly, it was better than if she had not cared.

She is not a bad traveling companion. Within a certain circumference, she spreads a serenity in the world. I puzzled myself with thinking what more any one could be expected to do, since one can't reach everybody; and it led me into the endless problems of a politico-moral economy,—the good of a privileged, luxurious class, the benefit of a polite and elegant civilization, the service of self-service, demand and supply, spending and earning,—before the pretty tapestry curtains were drawn aside from the stage, and Hope Truesdaile and her brother Arthur began the play we had come to see.

"Nothing is too good for a human being," somebody said to me once; and it came back to me now. Ah! but *which* human being? I don't think I began freely to listen to the stage dialogue until that other question, "Who is my neighbor?" flashed suddenly into syllables of light across my broken musings, and the memory of the Samaritan who went *out of his way*, for a *stranger*, answered over again all the confusion of reasoning. What a blessed finality the New Testament words are!

And did you ever think, Rose, how the very promise of that Spirit which men have come to fancy is leading them beyond where Christ led, was given as of that which should but "bring all to remembrance" of the things that He has told us?

Did I say we had come to see the play? Well, I suppose we had; and it was a charming thing to see; but these groups of happy, tidy, poor people, who sat around or behind us, upon the grass or garden benches, or strolled up and down the shady walks, keeping the little children blessedly quiet with fresh air and fragrance, and summer beauty, and hands full of ginger-bread; the working women who made holiday together, not caring much for the drama, but sitting in knots, farther off under the trees, chatting, and drinking glasses of lemonade and ginger beer; the bringing together of high and low, and what is harder, *between*, — for one sympathetic enjoyment, — this was something wholly beautiful and satisfying, and which I certainly had not come to England expecting to see.

At the regular tea-time, when the play was over, it was more beautiful yet.

The poor were first served. There was plenty of good cold beef, bread and butter, tea and fruit; and the Truesdailes and their friends, and their friends' servants, all helped around the tables where the humbler guests were carefully seated; until gradually, and not with any sharp distinction, it came to be everybody's turn to get something; and we sipped our tea, and ate our sugared strawberries in the intervals of looking after the old women's cups, and the children's buns, or even of tending a baby here and there, while the young mothers got rest and refreshment.

It was golden twilight when we went down to the water-gate, to see the barge off in which they sailed down the river again, these poor Londoners, to their every-day life and work in the close streets, quite content and very rich in the sense of the heavenly things that they could think of for another whole long year, as waiting a little way outside for them, and in the heavenly feeling of a human kindness, through which their bit of pleasure came.

They went off singing hymns, after their thanks and cheers. I don't think anybody grumbled that it was not more, or that they could not have it every day, as rich people do. They would not know what to do with it every day.

Certainly, but that the Lord Himself, in an hourly "great humility," dwells with these submissive souls, making their low estate imperial with grand endurance, it were hard to read his mystery! I do not think his "Ye have done it unto me," is spoken of a vicarious receiving; or that He sets men anything to bear, or any life to live, apart from his. I do not believe there is any vicariousness in all his universe of joy and sweetness, pain and punishment; but that up and down through all, even through sin, walks One, as the Son of Man, beside us, and takes of ours upon Him; and that so these least things are the really greatest, — the last are first, — the hardest most divine.

CHAPTER XIII.

FANCY-MAIL: AND HALDON HOUSE.

.
EDITH told me next morning while we were dressing, that Margaret had had a letter last night from "the Mackenzies." That meant, I suppose, from Harry.

"She was in great spirits, auntie," Edith said, with a tone of not quite comprehending. "She is apt to be in great spirits, or not in any at all. It seems as if she were always thinking whether she were content or not; and when she fancies she is, she gets into a high glee; and again she is all down — as if the very world had dropped a little way, with everybody on board!"

"Simon says 'up;' Simon says 'down;' Simon says 'wig-wag;'" said Emery Ann, oracularly, as she picked up my hair-brushes and tucked them into the bag that was to go to Hastings.

"I think Mrs. Regis is annoyed, either way," said Edith. "She says Margaret never stops where people can be comfortable; perhaps she would" — and here Edie checked herself, thinking, maybe, that she was talking out of school.

"If she knew exactly where people were, or where the comfort was," put in Emery Ann, unscrupulously. "Or if folks knew where *she* was. Mrs. Regis don't understand that girl. I believe she means well by her, but she nettles her. I can riddle it out a little; she is in a kind of a *spot*, — Margaret is; and I doubt if her mother ever got into a real spot in her life. She's gone right along in ready-made paths, always. She *will* have 'em ready-made; that's it, finally."

"I think Mrs. Regis says things to her sometimes, that she would say to herself if she were let alone," said Edith; "but she won't say them over *after* anybody. Margaret is — she

seems — contradictory about some things; not her own,—she is n't that, a bit; but about her friends. She does n't like to be *told* things. Auntie!" The child broke off suddenly, to put her arms round my neck and kiss me on both cheeks. "I'm so glad I've got you, who always do understand! And I'm glad I have n't got into a — spot! What are girls in such a hurry to, for? It is so nice just to be a *girl*!" And she ran back into her own room again; shy with the very admission that there might be experiences waiting that she had not quite come to yet.

I saw what she meant. Edith never comes and gossips; but she has great faith in auntie, and she thinks it safest for everybody that auntie should know everything.

"Contradictory." "Things that she would say to herself if she were let alone."

I found these words coming back to me. Margaret is certainly more restive with her stepmother's reasons, than she is with reason when it comes some other way. I have thought more than once that her interest here as the world calls it, is greatly *against* her interest. She is so jealous of that ready-made path, and its conditions. And Mrs. Regis never would think of that. She can measure the direct purchase which she holds upon Margaret's will or action, through the power left her over her circumstances; but she would not discern the reflex force which would move so proud a nature to resist.

In this, her tact, so wonderful in externals, wholly fails. She has that sort of inner touch whose sense lies just deep enough to make her gracious and graceful; quick to perceive discomfort and turn aside annoyance; but she has not that profounder reach, possessed only by an actual gift, or attained by a passing over of one's consciousness into another's, which sounds character and feels experience not one's own. Margaret, of a nobler make, yet has hardly either at present. She has the headlong ardor and intensity of a young girl; generous in intention, because adoring the idea of generosity; but realizing too keenly her own first contacts with life to put herself in other possible attitudes, or to face with a calm judgment, her own feelings

and apprehensions, which she takes to be unchanging verities and convictions.

Seeing this, and foreseeing through how many tides and alternations must come, if ever, a real adjustment and repose in Margaret's own self and destiny, or in the mutual relation of these two who call each other mother and daughter, — one cannot fully rejoice with the girl when she does rejoice; when these moods come over her of a fancied content, — a resting in the present or the merely circumstantial, — a "taking things as they come, and the world as it goes," according to the phrase. Yet it is lovely, for the moment, to see her face bright, and to feel her in tune with the pleasantness of the day and time; such a day and time as they were when we set off in the fancy mail coach for Tunbridge Wells.

We drove down in — flies or frys, should I make the plural of it? to White Horse Cellar, from which the coach departs. On the way, somewhere, — I can't in the least tell you where, — we went by a big building and a court-yard, and were aware of a little gathering, and saw hats raised, and caught the sound of a cheer; somebody said, — "The Duke of Cambridge;" I believe he was coming forth and mounting his horse. We did not see him, but I thought you might like to know that he was there, and we close by.

This fancy mail-coach — and I think they told us there are several others on different routes — is run for the pleasure and at the chief expense (passengers pay a slightly fancy price for seats, to keep the thing properly restricted) of two gentlemen, a lord and a colonel. I heard their names, but I can only give you the handles, which perhaps are the best of them. At any rate, it is the polite end to present, of things in general.

They drive — literally, themselves, often, but when not, their very fine retainers do — their own splendid horses, four in hand. The whole turnout is specklessly brilliant in finish, and elegantly complete in appointment; a real mail-coach, but, I think, glorified. No flash; all quiet, solid, but absolutely perfect; perfect as a parlor toy. The coachman wears plain dress, a gentleman's morning suit, it might be. The guard is resplendent in scarlet, and carries a shining horn, which he winds sig-

nals upon as we skim along. He put us up the steps to our top seats, — there are places for sixteen, railed and cushioned, on the roof ; and presently sounded the cheery blast, which gave notice of departure ; and down Piccadilly over the cool, watered pavement, we rolled on smoothest wheels toward Charing Cross ; then over Hungerford Bridge and through, I can't tell you what else of London precincts, but southeastwardly, of course, to the city borders, — the spaces growing larger and the air fresher, all the way, — we went out into the green country ; the omnibus drivers all touching their whips to their caps, and everything giving the road, as the guard's horn warned of our coming, to the representative Royal Mail as of old time ; so that we never swerved, or dropped from a clean trot, all the way through the crowded thoroughfares.

I felt a child's smile of glee stereotyping itself upon my face as we went ; and looking round to see if anybody noticed my "silliness," I discovered everybody's else marked with the same unconscious delight.

Emery Ann gave it voice. "I would n't give a cent to be the Queen !" she said to me. And I hushed her up, quick, for fear the superb coachman, just down in front, should hear her.

Nine miles out, — we had hardly begun to think of distance, and the bright bay coats of the horses showed no turning of a hair, — we stopped before a hostelry ; one must return to the old time phrases, in telling of a journey like this ; and then the coachman flung down the reins, grooms sprang forward to unloose the harness, others led out four fresh, magnificent posters, their shining tackle making musical rattle as they stepped, and without a second loss of time every buckle was fastened, the spotless "lines" handed up again, and the same smooth, swift gait taken up with the self-same rhythm of hoof-beat ; and away along green English lanes, past farms and cottages, between the hedgerows we read of in country stories, with an air-ocean of balm bathing us in delight, and a clear, glorious sunshine enrapturing the air, we sped, and sped, and wished it might last forever.

Every eight or nine miles we had four fresh horses ; each relay almost more splendid and eager than the last.

We went through the quaintest little villages, with their real old inns, — the Golden Lambs, and the Red Lions, and the Angels, — their narrow streets, with timbered houses and overhanging upper stories; past the manor places that each belonged to, heralded by such signs now and then as "Sennockes," "Sennocke Arms," etc.; which one can easily trace back to "Sevenoaks" and the like. I felt as if I were riding down the years, and through all the delicious old books of the old homeland. I felt sure I was getting the best of Europe (the Alps aren't Europe, — they are just creation), and I said so.

"It's the stir of the old blood; I suppose," I said to Mrs. Regis; "but somehow, I *can't* care for Italy and art as I do for these home places and real things. Italy will always, I fancy, have a certain foreign distastefulness to me. I never care much to read Italian stories; I am so awfully heterodox as not to worship their poets. The English and Scotch and German elements touch fibres in me; they are kindred; I never can have too much of them. And yet we are not going to Scotland or Germany."

You see, that cannot be, because we have only a year; and some of us have only just so much money. We have made up our minds to have Switzerland; which, as I have said, is not any man's land, but God's land; that will take all the summer we shall have left; and in the winter, Edith must have mild climate.

Besides, once down at the Italian lakes, as we shall be in October, who could keep away from Milan, Florence, Rome? I did not say there was not a certain *whole of me* that looks back reverently and wonderingly into the great Human Past, though the polarized particles of me have their positives and negatives, without which they could not be shaped at all into this particular Me, Patience Strong. Some time or other, perhaps I shall go to Scotland; meanwhile I must be content that it has come to me; that I feel it in temper and instinct; that I have inherited it. I am never tired of anything Scottish; it never discourages me to open a book and find it sprinkled with the roughest Highland dialect; its quaint words are spirit and music to me; I interpret them as if I recollected them. I feel

at home among the hills and lochs where I have never been. I can smell the heather from the very map. I *must* be content ; for things are rarely given twice,—both inwardly and outwardly,—here. That is the kingdom of heaven.

Margaret Regis and Mr. Armstrong had the box-seats ; Faith Armstrong sat behind with her children.

Mr. Armstrong chatted with the coachman, and drew forth nice little bits of local information, talk about country places, ownerships, histories. Margaret was amused ; she seemed buoyantly happy. Once she said, leaning back to me : “ How much I shall have to write home about this day ! How I wish — Helen — and everybody could be here ! Did you ever see such horses ? Did you ever dream of such driving ? ”

It was a help to her patchwork ; she had a brilliant lapful of the “ little pieces ” to-day.

We dined at Tunbridge Wells. It was a gradual let-down from the ecstasy of that coach-ride through the delicious Kent country, to stop here, take a stroll after dinner to the famous Pantiles, where Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale, and Fanny Burney — to say nothing of the heroines of old novels — walked and talked and had their day ; to look in at the shops, buy photographs and confectionery ; then, in an open carriage, to drive around the town, along the pleasant open roads, among the softly-swelling, moor-like hills and uplands, scattered over with cheerful houses and smooth-kept places,—before we at last took the prosy railway train that steamed us down across a little corner of Sussex to Hastings by the sea.

It was just dark when we reached there. We had “ flies ” again to take us through the town, along the quaint old streets, to the Castle End, near which is the lovely, low double-cottage which the Armstrongs and the Robert Truesdailes have taken together for two months.

What do you think the old Castle ruin made me think of most, as we neared it in the soft evening light ?

High up above the street upon the cliff, it stood against the mellowed east,—itself a thing mellowed, rounded, softened by decay, until it has a shadowy, dissolved outline, with no sharp definiteness anywhere. It reminded me, absurdly, of the “ tooth

of Time," and made me fancy that the old Rodent must have lost his last fang before he began upon this, and only gently *mumbled* it!

In a street of cottages and gardens stands the Haldon House, as the two buildings of very cosy, moderate size, — neither one large enough of itself for much of a family, — are called. Every "local habitation" has a name, you know, in England.

The two parts are connected by a sort of covered gallery, whose lattice windows look down into a deep greenery which is the garden. The whole is overrun wildly by ivies, jessamine vines, and climbing roses, with the blossoms of which the air was richly sweet.

The front door stood open, and one of Mrs. Truesdaille's maids and one of Lady Christian's waited there to receive us, courtesying as we came up.

Inside, the rooms were open, — the vine sprays wandering in through the low, broad windows; and in the first we entered the table was already laid with tea and fruit. It was just pleasantly light without candles, and would be for an hour.

This English twilight is like a gift of sweetness over and above the natural, expected day. It is like a kind of Indian Summer of delicious prolonging, overflowing, the sunshine into the darkness, and ransoming the night. "In the evening time it shall be light" were never words of such forceful beauty to me, until I found up here in the north the tender abiding of this soft amends.

We, also, overflowed like the twilight, through the rambling passages and up and down bedrooms, till each had found her place. Margaret and Edith were put together, in a little apartment opposite mine and Emery Ann's, across the garden-break between the buildings. Their window sash flew back as I opened mine, and the two faces, glad with exquisite surprise, were put forth at once, and two voices called over to me: "Aunt Pashie!" "Miss Patience!" "Do you think it is real? Do you begin to feel yourself wake up, or anything? *Are n't* you glad you came?"

This last is the stereotyped question Edie and I ask each other, remembering the weighings and hesitations of three months ago.

"Miss Patience," began Margaret, again, before I drew my head back, "Are n't you afraid it's like the fairy cottage Hans and Grethel found? Won't the old witch be after us before morning?"

"Hush up!" cried Edith, in a reckless rapture. "Her ain't a callin' we! *Us* don't belong to she!"

I hoped we did n't. I hoped no old haunting witch would lay her skinny, disenchanting finger upon our blithesome moods; for there is where the spell is put that crumbles beauty into dry leaves or turns it hideous.

The girls came down to tea with clusters and trails of jessamine in their hair, and for sweet breast-knots.

I shall have to skip. I will tell you all I can, and if you want any more, you may sing it yourself, as the old song says at the end. I think you can. I think I could go on singing a good while, from just these first lines and thrills, if no more written notes or verses came.

But they did come. They keep coming.

Next day, as if the cottage were not lovely enough, we went off picnicking. We went to Fairlight Glen; a beautiful, woody, brook-threaded ravine, buried low beneath the brinks of sunny downs, where the air was pasture-sweet, though so near the tingle of the sea.

We went in a big van; and we walked across the crisp turf from a stile that let us in from the road upon the Fairlight ground. We carried our shawls and baskets, the tidy maids helping with the heaviest; and we had our lunch, and rested after it all the midday through, under the great whispering beeches; and we came back by a long drive, in the van that had returned to meet us; getting sight of one or two old halls and parks, — of Ore Place, built first by "John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster;" passing over wild, desolate-looking reaches between, where here and there a windmill stretched its great arms forlornly; and at last in to bright, gay St. Leonard's, and so along the Grand Parade and by the sea-margin, to Hastings town, and its castle-cloud that lay soft again upon the evening blue, and beneath it to pretty Haldon House, which is home.

So quickly do we fit ourselves to that which fits, and feel ours. What difference is there, of years and days? Some time it shall be *all* ours; gathered up, even to the veriest glimpse no dropped crumb lost, of the twelve baskets full; and we shall find our future,—as some one who knows promised me on when I was in great loss and hunger and pain,—made up of the best of that which has been.

Is n't there something of that in the words: "When Christ who is our *life*, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him, in glory?" It doth not appear yet, what the body that life shall be. It is hidden, as it is builded, in the heaven. But it is all there.

The next day after that was Sunday. We took our boots and wandered out, after breakfast, upon the downs behind Haddon House, that stretched over to the sea.

We got into a soft, warm hollow, like a huge cradle, between two swelling ridges,—the Castle cliff rising up beyond the farthest,—the trough of which ran down to the sands, and through which we saw, across the green-walled vista, the shimmer and the blue of broad, glimmering waters. And here we sat ourselves down upon the grass, as the people did for whom Christ broke bread.

Still; still! As the sweet grave, or as the ante-heaven!

Faces take on a revealing look, I think, in such moments and places, as the faces of those do who have gone past and enter in.

Hugh Truesdaile,—one must drop the commonplace of praise sometimes; it is too trifling for high reverence, as it is too deferential for intimate nearness;—Hugh Truesdaile sat with his brow bare, uplifted; a deep light in his eyes of a day that poured about his spirit; and the wind that stirred his hair minded me of the whisper of a wind that bloweth where it listeth, and in which I was sure that he heard voices.

Lady Christian had a waiting look, of tender content. There was no instant care of ministry; and she is so especially a ministering spirit. About her there seemed to be folded wings; she was like one who only attends for an errand, but who in readiness is rest. The light seemed to fall gently down upon

her forehead and upon her half-dropped lids. I could think it fell upon her face from the Face above the Throne.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong had led the children down farther over the hill to "look at the water," and for little talks of their own with them, on the "Children's Day."

Miss Euphrasia drew near me, for which my heart brimmed silently toward her, as it did toward all the heavenly nearness of the time.

Mrs. Regis chose a seat a little withdrawn, and her eyes, as she rested them upon the distance, had an occupied look, which did not seem gathered from anything that lay between her and that horizon pale with a great light. She had upon her lap a book in the chocolate-paper covers of "Harper's Select Novels."

Margaret had brought no book. She had her little traveling portfolio on her lap, and she had untied its strings, and held her pencil in her hand. But she sat thinking, and did not begin to write. In the stillness and sweetness, — the reflux upon her spirit of the great tide of universal influence which sweeps back upon us when some little passing river-rush of our life is spent and loses itself against the greater deep, — the shadow and perplexity were coming back. She was measuring again the little against the large.

Lady Christian was the first to speak.

"I think this is a picnic again," she said, "if we only knew it, and looked into our baskets. Are we to keep all the lids quite close, and carry them back as they came?"

"There are picnics and picnics," said her husband, smiling. "There are those of a mutual contribution, and others where each brings for eachself."

"What a nice phrase!" said Miss Euphrasia. "How comfortably it gets rid of the unmanageable 'him' and 'her!' You have contributed already, Mr. Truesdaile."

"A word is a good thing enough," said Lady Christian; "and so are knives and forks. But Hugh has got something better than that for us; though he is apt to look after the plenishing. He is very particular about his spoons."

"I like best a long spoon to reach into my neighbor's dish

with, I think, especially on a picnic," he persisted, with a gentle playfulness that was full of earnest intent. "I'm sure we have each brought provender. Have n't we, Miss Tudor?" he said, catching Emery Ann's eye, and seeing it alight with some inward response.

"I'm sure," said Emery Ann, "I should never stop to think whether I had or not, any more — than a mouse in the middle of a cheese." And her hands clasped themselves upon her knees again, and her face turned toward the light of sky and sea. Emery Ann's "anymores" are as good, often, as the so earnest "moreovers."

"I felt pretty certain you would say it," said Mr. Truesdaille. "Is n't there some proverb about keeping one's dish right side up. After all, something to receive in, — and held open, upward, — is the providing. Even a prayer is less a speaking than a looking up and listening to hear what God will say. — There were six water pots set, with water; when they drew out, behold there was wine; for the Word had passed upon it.

He seemed to let it drop, there. We all sat still again, for quite a little time; then, quite in an every-day way, Mr. Truesdaille addressed himself to Mrs. Regis.

"You have some new book there?" he asked.

"Only 'Heidelberg.' A very old one. I confess," she said with that charming directness which at once acknowledges and absolves a shortcoming, "that my thoughts to-day are very much upon my journeyings, and my great wish for a little bit of Germany."

Between her word and his answer, in a flash of time, there rushed through my thought in a connected unconnection, — "General Rushleigh, — the friend he was to meet, — Heidelberg; it will certainly turn out somehow that she goes there and first."

"Well, — we were not bound together. I had shrunk from having my first vision of the Alps with her; and yet — My eye fell on Margaret, who apparently did not notice. Something *did* bind me, so that I was a great deal more unwilling than I had fancied, to have this happen.

"It is such a good thing," said Mr. Truesdaille, "that we can-

not bind ourselves rigidly with our plans, try as hard as we may; or settle everything beforehand. Something is sure to unsettle, and to shake into a better shape than we had intended. And if a thing is really good, sooner or later we get it. So that we can take our Sundays, — the days when we let it rest, or have to wait, — in great peace, Mrs. Regis. Did you ever notice how apt matters are to look at you with quite fresh faces, and show quite new possibilities and relations, on a Monday morning? I have wondered sometimes if that were not, in the deep philosophy of things, chiefly what the pause was put for, — the Sabbath that was made for man. Certainly, nothing ever stands still; because the Father worketh. What looks like waiting, is leaving time for the chemistries of change. Did you ever put away a letter that you found it hard to write, or a book that was hard to understand, in the very middle of a sentence or a page?"

"And find it straightened out next time? Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Regis. "I don't think there is any miracle much greater than that."

"I do not think so either," returned Mr. Truesdaile.

She rolled up her book in her hands, and rested them with it upon her knees, looking into his face. She had said something herself, — she had put forth something, — to which he simply assented, as if it needed nothing more. The conversation — become conversation — interested her.

"I always say to myself then," he began again, "it is Saturday night, for this thing. Let the world turn round again, and make a Sunday between, and I will come after it, and see."

"Did you ever hear," said Mrs. Regis, "of making butter by burying the cream, — using the globe itself for a great churn? For that is what the people say of it, — that the earth turns it, by its own turning. You make me think of that."

Emery Ann whispered to me, — "He'd make *anybody* think — of something."

I remembered the Spirit, that "quickeneth whom it will."

"I believe I had it in my own mind, dimly, and could not recollect what it was. Thank you, Mrs. Regis. Does not that join itself to the sign of Jonah? A burial — a disappearance

— a blank — and a giving again? There shall no sign be given it but that sign. How the voice rings the sentence into all our lives! And yet, what a blessing upon all waiting, that the Lord made this day!"

He took off his cap again, and lifted his head up to the air and shine, — the great sphere of the day above and about him.

I saw Margaret drop her pencil into her lap, and put the fingers of both her hands across her forehead, listening. "Why does n't he come to this child?" I thought to myself. As if the Lord were sending him round with bread and wine, and he were going to miss one of the little ones that needed it.

I say, sending him round, and he had not moved from his place. Mrs. Regis was a little above and behind him, on the outer edge of our group; he had only turned himself upon his elbow toward her and addressed his question which grew into this talk that I thought she ought to put away as Mary put away the gold and frankincense that the kings brought to the child. He gives as the kings give; to that which is but barely born, perhaps, but which is to be the power of Life.

I wonder if it is not possible that I drew, with my own thought, his to Margaret Regis?

There is a great mystery of the will, which mesmerism and spiritism make no science of. When I was a little girl there was a tree in the orchard, — you remember it, Rose, — that bore beautiful, early, red-streaked, spicy summer apples. I was not allowed to beat down the fruit, but I might pick up any that dropped beneath. I went down one day and searched without success in the deep, warm grass, and then I looked up to a bough on which, at the very end, hung a round, perfect, crimson, shining apple, that almost quivered on its stalk for ripeness, I thought, as the faint breath of wind stirred the twig. "I wish it would tumble right down, this very minute," I said aloud; and then a great shock went suddenly through me, for plumb to the ground, at my very feet, shooting a red line through the air, as it came, fell the apple at my word. I never got over it. I have been less daring in my wishes ever since.

I sat looking at Margaret, who looked at the sea. She was down upon the lower edge of our little party, as her step-mother

was above us. I was in a line between the two, nearer to each than anybody else was, and able to catch with the one ear what one might speak, and with the other what the other. So I stayed ; for not having put myself there on purpose, I thought I was put, and might stay, — since they all knew it.

Mr. Truesdaile shook himself upright with a sudden movement as I said to myself, " Why does n't he come to this child ? " and came down. As when the red apple fell, I was startled by the instant gravitating to my will.

" Now if she will only speak ! " I thought.

I might have been the fisherman's wife in the story, sending her wishes down to the sea. For the sea shone and smiled, and something gave me my wishes as fast as I made them.

Mr. Truesdaile dropped himself into a little hollow just below Margaret's feet, a little at one side. I do not believe he would have crossed her line of forward vision, or blotted from her for one instant that beauty before which we all sat, our faces all one inevitable way. It would have been, in the large, what crossing past the fire-shine is in the small.

But I suppose she turned her head a little at his coming, as was natural, and I suppose she felt the " gift of God " when she saw what might look ready in his face ; for I heard her say, — hardly to him, but as if his presence troubled her thought gently to words, — " How hard it is to write yesterday's letter to-day ! "

" Because there is to-day's letter to read ! " he answered.

" I am not sure that I am reading," said Margaret.

Her honesty forced her into speech, for she knew what luminous text he saw, and what he might fancy of her eyes intent upon the page.

It put me in memory of the " Give me to drink," and the " Thou a Jew, of whom is the salvation, and I a Samaritan ! "

" Maybe not," said Mr. Truesdaile. " It is more like the children looking at pictures. That is God's way of showing, like the mother's, sometimes. Afterwards, He ' tells us the reading.' "

Margaret spoke, abruptly.

" Why, when the best of one feels some chance of being

happy, must the — smallest — of one take that very time to be miserablest ? ”

She spoke with the grammar of a little child, out of a child's simpleness, and pain, and craving.

“It is a good thing you do not say ‘worst.’ People are so apt to mistake the ‘smallest’ for that.”

“But if it grow ? ”

“It is n't meant to grow, exactly, in itself. It is often some thing that will soon be done with, like the temporary parts of plants. It has the sentence of death in itself. That is why you feel it small. It is cramping the large, real growing.”

“It might not be that,” said Margaret, sadly. “I have seen a plant growing between stones, — like Picciola.” And then she smiled a little.

“I do not mean,” she resumed quickly, “where people *themselves* are planted, exactly.”

Here showed that finer tact, of which I believe Margaret capable. She would not have her word attributed to any sense of pressure from her ordinary, obvious relations. She was keenly delicate of her step-daughtership.

“It may be the things in one,” she said, “that should grow but that find themselves ‘sown among the stones’ you know. I suppose it is our own doing often, that the stones are there.”

“I wonder how far, or to what use, we could go in metaphor,” said Mr. Truesdaile, smiling. “I suppose you mean, maybe, that we make certain circumstances for ourselves, and then find they hinder us.”

Margaret flashed a look round at him of which I caught the side sight. Was he a mind-reader, — a second-seer ? How did he know ? That was what the look seemed to say.

But perhaps it occurred to her, as it did to me, that if he *had* known, he would scarcely have alluded so unhesitatingly.

The keen question subsided out of her eyes, — I could not half see them, but the rest of her face told how her eyes were looking, under their dark lashes and their “level fronting lids,” — and she said quietly, “Yes. Are n't we making circumstances all the time, and mistakes in making them ? And then we have to take ourselves as we are ; there is no going back. What a

snarl it is! I don't see, Mr. Truesdaile, why so much was left to us."

She added these words in a different tone, as if scarcely venturing them. There was a certain hardness also in the voice, though lowered, as of a constraint broken through unwillingly by strong impulse, and tightened again about herself in the very speaking.

"No going back — into the snarl; no. That would never unravel it. But forward is out of it, if we go the way we are led. When once we put our hands in His, Miss Margaret!"

"I cannot understand. Other people are being led, too. Our snarls cannot concern only ourselves. We have no *right* to break through them."

"Did I say 'break through?' Did you ever hold a skein of silk for your mother to untangle?"

Margaret sat silent. Her brows settled suddenly, like a cloud. He felt his way quickly out of that blind turn.

"We are falling into metaphor again," he said. "There is something more direct. Let us take that. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"

"Do you think He will set these things straight, when we have made — if we have made — them crooked?"

"It was what He came for. 'To make the crooked straight.' To judge the earth in righteousness."

"But that is the great Judgment. The Judgment when it will be too late. In which we are to take what we have earned."

"If it were too late, there could not be any judgment. Perhaps you have got the wrong word into your mind. Are you not thinking of sentence, — penalty, — instead of judgment?"

Margaret raised an earnest look at him.

"Is n't it what judgment is for, — to pass sentence?"

"I do not think it is. I think it is to justify."

"*Wrong-doing?*" She spoke the word with an italicising of amazement,

"Yes."

Margaret positively stared at him. I thought I knew what

was coming, for I have had the same feeling about that word. It has been one of my "dark lanterns" in the Scripture.

"Suppose we say 'adjust' instead of 'justify' — the wrong. And suppose we need not think of a by-and-by judgment, that might be too late, — but of a Now, which is always the acceptable time, and the day of salvation?"

Some light, like a clear dawn, softly rose up in her face.

"How easy that would make life!" she sighed; and her eyes fell down out of their surprise into a sweet, momentary rest.

"It does. It is the Gospel of good news. The 'believe and be saved, and behold the glory.' The glory begins, however faintly, in the very moment with the believing; and it shines more and more, into the full, perfect day. The day when everlasting shall stand in its right light, — 'justified.'"

"And what becomes of the by-and-by Judgment, then?"

"I don't know that that is any matter, so long as God has his way."

"Don't you believe in any retribution?"

"We shall have to come to definitions again. What is 'retribution?' Though it is a man's word, after all. I do not know of it in the Bible, where men have supposed they got it. What does it stand for, however, — as a dictionary word?"

Margaret bethought herself of her Latin. "For 'paying back,' does n't it?" she said.

"And *who* pays back? Is it God, who tells us not to recompense evil with evil, who means to 'pay us off,' as angry men threaten?"

"I don't know. Is n't there a good deal about it? Rendering to every one according to his deeds, and receiving the thing done in the body?"

"I think we should come by those words, if we follow them, as by a separate thread to the same centre. Or rather we should find we had taken up the same thread by another loop. Let us trace out the 'paying back.' 'Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.' Is n't that *our* paying back, — which is just what God wants of us, and which when He has brought us to it, is our salvation? Begun and perfected as soon and as fast as we pay?"

"But there it is, in those very words, — the no escaping what we have done. 'Ye shall by *no means* come out.' You put me right back where I was, Mr. Truesdaile."

"*Until*—" Mr. Truesdaile repeated. "And God knows what the uttermost farthing is, and when we have paid it. He says also, he will '*save* to the uttermost.' The paying is just the putting it all into his hands. That is the '*imputed righteousness*.' That is the whole remission and redemption. A redemption — beginning now, and reaching on to the uttermost, — from the very things we have otherwise brought upon ourselves."

Margaret sighed. "After all, it was not the last Judgment that was troubling me," she said.

I was glad to hear those words. They were drifting into theologies, — questions which to be sure include all questions, — but losing, I was afraid, what Margaret, in her present need, was feeling after. This young girl, with her pure life behind her, was not trembling at the Great Final Judgment.

"I know," said Mr. Truesdaile. "But the present justifying. What I say is that they are one and the same. And that it is all a setting right. And that it only hurts so far as we set ourselves against it."

"If we could only know which, — what, — we were to set ourselves against, — or for. That is the way it hurts sometimes."

Margaret was sufficiently enigmatical. But the wonder was she spoke at all.

Mr. Truesdaile was used to giving the message that came by him, over the wires of the heavenly telegraph, whether he knew precisely to what the words were linked or not.

"You said '*if*,' a little way back in our talk. I noticed that, and laid it up. 'If we have made things crooked.' When we are not quite sure about that, the thing we have to do sometimes is, to take no new act that can possibly be wrong, and to wait until we see. 'Shun evil as sin, and look to the Lord,' Swedenborg says. That is the beginning of the straightening."

A few minutes after that, Margaret said to Mr. Truesdaile,

"I wish I could get away home, — to Haldon House, — without any commotion."

Mr. Truesdaile got up, turned round to her, and gave her his hand, and helped her to her feet.

"Let us walk over the down a little," he said.

And they moved away quietly together, just as the Arstrongs came back toward us from their little saunter.

They passed up over the fell, and disappeared beyond the farther slope. Ten minutes afterwards, Mr. Truesdaile returned alone. "Miss Margaret was a little tired," he said to Mrs. Regis. "She thought she would not come down again. I took her across a nearer way, and left her at the foot of the garden."

"Margaret is so exceedingly capricious," Mrs. Regis said to me, an hour later, as we were all walking back, the long way above the edge of the town. "She wants continual excitement. She was radiant the day of the coach-ride to Tunbridge. And to-day she is all down again. She cannot endure repose."

"Excuse me," I answered. "I do not think so. I think repose is just what she is after. The world is beginning to look serious to her. Now and then, perhaps, she rather violently persuades herself that all is right, and she is having perfectly good time. I have done the same thing myself, thirty years ago."

Mrs. Regis looked absolutely uncomprehending.

"I cannot understand people," she said, "if I must go back thirty years to do it. Thirty years rubs out a great deal."

"If that is all, I wonder what the thirty years are good for. No. I did not say it. I kept it to myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LORD WARDEN AT DOVER.

.....
.... We left for Dover the middle of the week. After the home-life with the Truesdailes, the great Lord Warden Hotel, with its crowd of strangers, its ceremony of tables and long orders, its regiment of solemn waiters in black dress-coats and white neckcloths, — gentlemen in orders one might very innocently call them, — seemed cold, hard, homesick. Emery Ann said that every time they brought her a bit of bread, she felt as if they were going to say, "Dust to dust, — ashes to ashes!"

But the dining-room looked out upon the pier and the white surf-line of the Channel; and the long glazed corridor through which we passed to our rooms was directly over the beach upon which the waves broke in musical, low thunder; and our rooms themselves were on the Castle side, whose worn ramparts, time-mouthed, like those of Hastings, but kept in service and repair, we could see beyond the roofs of the curious old town, crowning the white cliff; the very front of England, set watchful and firm, toward the other nations, across the narrow strait of Saint George.

I was a great deal too tired to go over it, or even to it; but the others did; and somehow, now I was here, and could sit and look at it, and hear their story about its walls and towers, and galleries, and loop-holes, and armories; its relics of lances and pikes and flags, and Queen Elizabeth's Cannon, which like many an old weapon, of arms or argument, tremendous in its day, could not be fired off now without firing it to pieces, — I was very content to realize it so.

I do not mean to fret about the things I cannot do in Europe, any more than I should have fretted if I never could have come. I may think of them by and by, wishfully; but so I used to

think, when I was a child, of the nice things at yesterday's party which I could not eat. I shall remember that, and know that this is as childish.

Edith needed rest as much as I; though her girlish enthusiasm took her to the old Castle. After that, we settled down very much together, to our resting and our writing. During the five days that we waited here, I brought forward my story to you from the middle of our London visit to our leaving Hastings; as you will find by dates and details.

Mrs. Regis was more ready to assent to the delay than I had expected when I proposed it. She said Dover was the jumping-off place, and it was a comfortable spot to take the look from before we leaped.

Many travelers were coming and going; we had encountered already several of our old ship-acquaintances, *en route* for various points on the Continent. I felt as if Mrs. Regis had not quite settled her mind about immediate plans, and that I should not be surprised any day if she and Margaret were to leave us and choose some other route into Switzerland.

For our part, we three were all very thankful for the pause. One feels that little halts are needed; little breaks in the fierce impulse of this foreign travel. The wheels heat, you know, with constant motion.

Do you remember the old "Boston days?" When we went into the city shopping, and rushed through four, or five, or even seven hours of crowding and counter-dodging, holding on to the thread of our errands with the last grasp of reason, and on to our accumulated packages with our "crazy-bones?" I am sure if this procession from place to place, and this tying up of good times into mental white parcels, without any chance to sort or look at them, or to remember what we had got, were to go on without intermission, I should feel as if Europe were one great feverish, frantic "Boston day," from which I could not get back.

I want to make a home and an end, now and then, to stagnate a bit in, and start afresh from. Emery Ann says: "You can't play tag continual, without a *goal* to run to!"

Emery Ann was perfectly happy in an established seat at a corner window, making burlaps covers for our new basket trunks.

Also, we had set up a "cupboard," in a bureau with deep drawers. We used to go down into Snargate Street, — that queer, narrow, ancient thoroughfare of tiny shops with low doorways and overhanging second stories, and signs swinging close above people's heads, — and buy biscuits and buns, and baskets of raspberries, and little pots of delicious Scotch marmalade, and actually little bits of boxes of fresh butter, — for we ordered "à la carte" at the Lord Warden, and paid "*carte blanche*," — and we made our own little lunches and suppers, at the remnants of which the funereal gentleman who took them away looked as if he were officiating at a ceremony slightly out of his grand and exclusive line of business. But if we could n't be independent, what was the use of having come from the Land of the Declaration?

Margaret came and sat with me one afternoon, when all the rest were gone out. She brought a box full of ribbons and gloves and little trinkets of apparel and ornament, to look over and "pack." As she rolled and fastened and placed, she asked me suddenly, —

"Why should n't one have ups and downs, Miss Patience, as the tide does? Is n't it the only way to keep the sea-level, as the world goes round?"

"I suppose we must have ups and downs, — apparently," I answered, "until we get where there is no more sea. Only the true ups and downs, you know, are a really steady *following*."

"Of the light set to rule the night," Margaret said, taking my thought and finishing it, as I should hardly have expected.

"I like that," she went on, "You always do put nice things into one's head, Miss Patience. Mamma is right, though; I *am* very inconsistent. I cannot keep the same mood or mind. There are so many sides to everything. People allow *two*; and yet they won't let you go back and forth to look at them, without making an outcry at you of fickleness, and not knowing what you want. They seem to think that is the most awful charge, — the very unpardonable sin. As if anybody ever did know what they wanted."

"I suppose when we have found that out, our errand is done," said I.

"And we can go home," Margaret rejoined, not lightly. The girl takes one up wonderfully. We think we have a great deal to teach these young ones, out of our experience; we forget in what deep soundings of their own they may be at the very time.

"I don't think it is such a very grand virtue to be 'decided,'" said Margaret. "But one wants to feel *sincere*."

"Sincerity is not always mere consistency," I replied. "A very honest, earnest looking at both sides, as you call it, may show like vacillation for a good while, but the act will at last be true. There is a kind of decision which comes of limitation and tenacity; seeing only one side, and *hanging on* to it."

"Mr. Truesdaile helped me," she said, gently, "to one thing. To *do* nothing, 'from this out,' as the Irish say, that is not just, certain true. Then he says it will all straighten itself. No, — *be* straightened. But one can't help thinking how. And sometimes it looks all right, and then again all wrong. At least it has. Oh, Miss Patience, if people did n't try to be Providence for you! — I suppose papa thought he was doing the best. But it is just a block between mamma and me, and always will be. I won't be a good child for what I can get!"

She took it for granted I knew what everybody had talked of; and I made no pretense of not knowing.

"Can't you set all that quite aside, and do the true thing, as if there were no conditions?"

"No. For the conditions alter everything. They make it that I have no *mother* to go to, — in the first place; only a mamma, — a guardian," she said, with a pathetic little humor. "I might like her very well, if it was n't for my interest to. And I might be surer — of what other people mean, — if it was n't for — conditions. The only thing I am sure of, is that I am letting — people — wait, for what the waiting makes me feel bound to, and yet" —

She wanted some one to talk to, poor child; and she found it so hard to talk! Many girls in her place would have made a girl-friend, — like my Edith, perhaps, — and told all their secrets to her; but Margaret and Edith were not girls to chatter like that. She wanted a mother.

I wonder if she felt something of your dear nearness, through me, motherdie, that made me seem motherly !

"A long waiting may prove much — on both parts," I ventured, just to let her see that I understood, without very many explicit words, more than for any great help or wisdom I felt myself in what I uttered.

"If it had only been to lose it altogether — at *any* time ! There would have been some proving by that. But seven years waiting ! How can you be sure which it means most of ? I wonder if it ever occurred to Rachel to be jealous of those flocks and herds that utilized the waiting ? And it was Leah he got, after all. Rachel won't always turn out Rachel, at the end of seven years. And a girl can't ask a man to marry her sooner !"

"Not if Jacob is too cheerfully resigned," I thought to myself. I began to have a little insight of what was the matter.

It does not take deep reading to spell over a young fellow like Harry Mackenzie. Living on the surface of life ; born to soft things ; waiting in a taking-for-granted manner for more soft things to be assured to him ; never visited with a suggestion whether it would not be possible and manly to take hold of hard things and build with them ; hampered, — just as girls are hampered, who have to take the chief blame for the modern infrequency of marriage, — with all sorts of little selfish, gentlemanly habits, which the "governor" pays for now, but won't when the term of his administration is ended ; just as much tempted to think of money in marrying, for his own sake, as the girl is ; not growing a single spiritual inch, for not putting forth his powers as a man should ; just amiably Micawbering along, and most Micawberly devoted to somebody he would like well enough to marry when the time comes and things "turn up ;" meanwhile the princess-nature of some Margaret growing as a girl's nature does grow ivy-fashion, with rootlets that put forth along every stem of her being, whether they find anything outside of them to lay hold of or not, — was not here a clew to just such an experience, setting aside all peculiarity of circumstance, as was making between these two ?

While I thought this over, Margaret, maybe, was thinking that her half incoherent allusions were either more or less than

they should be, if she would withhold or give the confidence that began to ache in her.

"You know," she said, breaking the pause with a quiet straightforwardness, "that mamma does not want me to hold myself as engaged to Harry Mackenzie."

"Do you want to?" I asked, with as sudden a straightforwardness that came from I know not where.

It reached her unexpectedly. But after the first uplifting of her eyelids in surprise, I could see that she was glad that we had come to something plain and real.

"Perhaps it is just the difference between wish and want," she said. "I *mean* it. I have let him believe I would, ever since I was sixteen. And I might *want* it, — *wholly*, — if he were — just a little more — what he might be. But I think this waiting is keeping him a boy. I could n't care for a *boy* all my life, Miss Patience!"

"Why don't you tell him so?"

Her eyes opened again.

I do not know exactly what possessed me; but these short, abrupt, outright questions were all that would come; and they were spoken almost before I knew.

For an instant, an idea seemed to lighten in her face; the perception of something real that she might be to him, instead of merely the nice, pretty girl that he liked best to be with; of an intercourse, that taking hold at once of the verities between them, should develop, if not what her "might be" indicated, then what was meant to be; that should prove and settle on the true, living grounds. But the shade came back again as she said, —

"I am cornered — with those seven years, and — because I cannot be in a hurry. Besides, I don't think I could train him up, and then marry him! I want him to *be*. And I'm just as bad and false as I can be to say these things, for he *is* nice, and I've always liked him, and he cares for me! And I won't give him up because of those nasty conditions. I've picked *this* word up here in England," she added, with a short, excited little laugh.

She would not "desert" him. It was precisely the feminine correlative of the Micawber type.

"But in the mean time," I said, "if you are anything to each other, it is something deeper than regards just the things you are to have and enjoy together by and by; it must relate to what you *are*. Try him with your own best, Margaret. Don't give him little pieces. Be *yourself* to him, at any rate. If that is not Rachel, but Leah, to him, let the years show. Of the truth, the truth comes."

I felt I was getting dreadfully sententious, and that there was something that might lie also in the seven years that neither of us touched upon.

"Be yourself to yourself," I hurried on. "Live your life, and be honest with it to him. Let it tell its own story. Don't base all your letters, all your words, on a foregone conclusion. Don't send a letter, or say a word, that is not, as you said just now, 'just certain true.' Don't hold out to him what you have not for him. And if you find" — I paused on these words, for they felt heavily responsible upon my lips — "that the understanding between you is a fetter, — that it troubles, hinders, perplexes you, — tell him that."

"It is what Mr. Truesdaile said; only you apply it for me. I told you I wanted a mother to go to."

She kissed me, and went away.

Am I breaking sacredness to you, Rose? I, too, must have my helps to go to. I do not always need an answer back. It is a help to me, just saying things over to you; as it was, — as it is, — to motherdie! Only mother is *at my heart*, now; and I need n't go to her with slow words; yet, while we are outside, in the slowness, the words "justify."

I think breaking a confidence is flinging it where it ought not to go. If any one gives it to me, it is not, I take it, just to hold fast; it is for some heart-burying which shall circulate it through my life, to get whatever breath of life upon it the rest of me may get, and to come back from it sweetened, lightened, sifted somehow of its doubt or trouble. I think it is like the talent that the Master will come for again, asking for that which has grown of it to meet a fresh, a larger demand.

I think the angels who minister into our lives, may have a

confidence up there with each other about us, which is not betrayal, and which we should not resent. Not that we are the angels, Rose! Only the angels' copyists. This is one of the things, however, for which we must pray that we may "have right judgment in all things;" and then be sure not to act on the first little uncertain impulse—instead of judgment—when it comes.

I am pretty certain that Margaret sent back no letter to America from either Hastings or Dover.

CHAPTER XV.

REALLY ABROAD.

.
 THE Channel is a great gulf to cross, after all. Over
 at, you are out of country, lineage, and language, — from
 hich the ocean had not separated you. I begin to understand
 e English word "abroad." I might have understood it before.
 is not the day's sailing that you are away, that divides from
 ything.

We had a bright morning to cross in; and not a very bad
 a, though it was rough enough.

We were very proud of not being seasick. Our exemptive
 alady was too recent. We had not outgrown our protection.
 e stood, atilt upon the rocking deck, enjoying the swaying
 ad bounding as the birds enjoy the springing of the boughs.

The change and excitement, — the vague, glad anticipation,
 - were good for us. I happened to know how good they were
 r Margaret. It is such a blessed thing that living is very un-
 ke romancing. There are such long, sweet, breezy chapters
 etween the feverish points; the commonplace rests and re-
 eshes us so. The delights poured in upon us, whether we will
 not almost, through so many channels quite independent of
 at which is shut or morbidly preoccupied, minister to us such
 xpected vitalities to contend with our disease. We are
 rced, for the greater part, to breathe a diluted air instead of
 ie fierce, unqualified oxygen that would burn us up. How
 nderly denial itself wraps us round with safety, — delay is
 ounted out with comforts! I fancy the chief harm in novels is
 ie elimination of all the gentle, protective medium, and the
 oncentration of the intense.

If I *were* writing a story, Rose, — don't laugh; there is a
 tory, I know, in everything; but if I were *making* one, I

would make places in it to catch breath. As they leave air-holes in long tunnels.

" 'Here is land,' " I said to Edith. " 'The ship is sailing up to it. It is a country. It is France. We will go on shore.' "

Edith laughed. " 'There are trees ; and houses. There are men upon the land. Are they Frenchmen ? ' "

" What *are* you saying ? " exclaimed Mrs. Regis, who had not been brought up, I suppose, on Barbauld.

" We are doing map questions in 'Easy Lessons,' " replied Edith, who had always delighted in the old-fashioned story-books she could rummage out of the ancient secretary at the Farm ; and who knew Mrs. Barbauld by heart. Which does not mean by rote, either ; for I dare say neither of us recollected the precise words.

But that sublime creature in police uniform, standing on the pier above the gangway, directing the crowd and talking two languages indiscriminately, beginning a sentence in French and ending it in English as his audience filed along, and he descried unerringly the nationality of each successive comer, — was never mentioned in Barbauld. I should not think he belonged in easy lessons, certainly. Not any more than the steam-sailing which connected our little "walk" from rim to rim of England with our coming "promenade" across the champagnes of France.

We were overpowered and made to feel small at the very outset. We were sure we could never smatter like that.

They did not wait for our tardy French. They put us along, somehow, upon the right track, and into the right train.

We found ourselves separated in two compartments of the carriage ; for in the embarrassments of " *Ière*," " *IIème*," " *Pour dames seules*," " *Pour fumer* " and " *Defense á fumer*," we ran up and down until every one was partly filled, and we had to jump in as we could.

Edith, and Emery Ann, and I, found ourselves in company with an old French gentleman and lady, a young French girl traveling by herself, and a stiff, silent young Englishman, who might be a "milord" for all we knew.

The foreigners — I mean the natives — were voluble. We listened meekly, subduedly ; and made our first trial whether we had ears to hear or not.

Their command of their own language was imposing. We forgot that we could astonish them as much in English. We neglected our own weapons. For my part I grew restlessly ambitious, as I did when I stood by my grandmother while she showed me how to knit. "Click ! click !" went the needles. "Let *me* try !" I exclaimed, fired by their motions as if they had struck sparks. "Let *me* try," was in my mind now, "even if I drop all the stitches !"

So, suddenly, after long, weary silence, to the amazement and almost dismay of Edith, I broke forth and spoke. It was when we had stopped at some still, sleepy, sunny way-station, where doors had been flung open and passengers had alighted. The young Englishman was out, pacing the platform.

I think I made an essay in this wise, after a little careful mental preparation ; addressing myself to the elderly dame beside me : —

"Combien de temps, madame, s'il vous plait, est-ce qu'on s'arrête ici ?"

(If the right mistakes, — I mean the ones I made then, — are not there, there are others that will do as well.)

"Sept minutes, madame," was the reply.

"Merci, madame."

She had understood me, at any rate. I hope I was not unchristianly puffed up, as I sat back in my corner and came wisely to an end ; but I had a slight sensation such as I imagine one might feel who had just opened a successful communication with the planet Mars.

"How did you dare ?" asked Edith, who is almost as reticent of her French in public, as she would be of her prayers.

"I did n't," I answered ; "but I thought it must come some time ; and I wanted to see if I could. Pray keep on talking now, if you can ; I am dreadfully afraid she will say something of her own accord."

But the old Frenchman and the young Englishman got in again ; a new way passenger filled up the one vacant seat, and the train moved on.

It was a great deal worse at Paris. There I really had to talk, and be talked to, which is so infinitely more tremendous.

We were claiming our luggage, and submitting to the Douane inspection. (What a good, old-womanish name that is for the petty, tyrannical surveillance which is nevertheless, like the duenna's watchfulness, always evaded!)

A certain portmanteau, belonging to our division of the party, was missing. We had seen it on the Dover boat. The hotel porter had brought it to us, and we had told him it was to go with the luggage. Consequently, as we found afterward, it had not been registered.

"Il manque encore une pièce," I told the officer. "Un portmanteau, — brun, — jaune, — comme ça, —" pointing to a russet trunk. What he said to me in reply, I shall never know.

"Est-ce que vous pouvez bien me dire, monsieur? Ou faut-il faire enquête, s'il vous plaît?"

He signed us round the square inclosure, upon the barricade of which were piled the heaps of boxes. We went round, peered anxiously everywhere, and came back.

He was evidently growing impatient. He had examined and passed our trunks, and two porters, frantic for the job, were tugging at the handles and vociferating inquiries as to "voitures" and the way we would go.

"Mais, monsieur," I began again, "c'est perdu, — le portmanteau. Nous l'avons vu sur le bateau à vapeur à Douvres; est-ce qu'on peut l'avoir laissé à Calais?"

He asked me some question about registering. I told him, as well as I could, that I did n't know; that we had sent it to be put with the other luggage after we were on board.

"Alors, madame," — and the word sounded like his ultimatum, — "il faut envoyer dépêche au chef de gare à Calais. On vous l'enverra demain, sans doute."

I think I made it out like that after we got into the carriage. It certainly did not come to me as he was saying it. I took it away in a snarl, to pick out as I went. For we had to submit, and follow the porters and the things that remained to us which they were carrying off. I had said, helplessly, "Hotel de Normandie;" and they had waited for no more.

"That's another thing that people kept telling us that is n't so," said Emery Ann.

Emery Ann has a way of stringing things together with "thats," at regular intervals, like a kind of beadwork.

"That we should find people that could talk English everywhere," she went on.

"Depends upon how you put in your 'everywhere,'" said Edith.

I was busy arranging and interpreting my mental phonography, and had just made it out.

"The man was n't there, any way," said Emery Ann.

"No, only the woman," rejoined Edith, laughing.

"One woman talked," I put in solemnly; "and she — did n't talk English."

"And I'm persuaded in my own mind," continued Emery Ann, from where she left off, "that he never will be, when the thing has just got to be said at the minute, or else forever after hold your peace."

"If we could only forever after hold our pieces!" I ejaculated, fervently. "I shall have to write a French telegram, now; and perhaps a letter."

Greatness was thrust upon me. The fool *has* to rush in, sometimes, — he is put there on purpose, — where angels won't. Edith was too fresh from her Fasquelle, and her much-corrected exercises. She knew too well the difficulties, and the possibilities of mis-handled phrases. My old Wanoströcht had lain dormant in my system, and now cropped up as a kind of instinct, which made me think of what the instincts, or innatenesses, of this and farther existence, may be. Then there were the little scraps of conversation lessons that you and I had, Rose, with Madame Eustache; and the bits out of books, and the French in the French air about me. I began to feel that I was flung into the sea, and should perhaps swim in some floundering fashion, rather than go down. At any rate, I would not go to the Regises about it. I had made up my mind at the beginning that in a double party like ours, the only way to avoid doubling the annoyances of travel would be for each side to keep its own little separate questions and hindrances as much to itself as possible.

It is just as it is when people go shopping together. If they both try to do all each other's errands, they get all mixed up and tired out, and do nobody's.

Mrs. Regis and Margaret had been busy with their own affairs at the Douâne; they came away in company with us, as usual, in a second "voiture;" and we were driven along some great avenue, across a broad, magnificent boulevard, and through a labyrinth of turnings in old, narrow streets, from the Embarcadère du Nord to the Rue St. Honoré and the Hotel de Normandie.

"Do you think we have come to a nice place?" asked Edith, doubtfully, as the carriage stopped, and a bareheaded, bowing concierge appeared in what looked like a dingy entrance to some unknown darkness within old walls.

"Baedeker says so," I answered, picking up my little red book and preparing to extricate myself as the door was opened.

Through the dark arched entrance we came into a pretty court-yard, set round with plants and shrubs, — orange-trees, rose-trees, laurels, oleanders, — and looking up between the four high, many-windowed walls, to a clear, sweet patch of summer sky.

Our first French day was softly closing into twilight.

And this was really all of it, — so far, — that I glance back over in these few, meagre pages, half hating to send them.

The day's journey had been very different from our first day across England. The flat, marshy country stretching inward from the north coast had seemed in itself a dismal blank. Nothing lay behind us between Paris and Calais that stirred much interest, except the old city of Amiens and its great cathedral which we could not stop to see. It was a miss; but we are hastening toward the Cathedral — older, grander — that the Lord has set in the midst of this continent of his, to shed his waters down from; as He has put the Himalayas in his east, and the Rocky Peaks in his west; whose summer gates stand open now, but will shut fast by and by, bolted with ice and overhung with avalanches.

I have given you just what I had to give; I scorn to copy a line of guide-book. I was chiefly taken up with the Barbauld

novelty of the stepping over as she and Charles did, — the sudden wonder of the language let loose out of the grammars, alive, over a whole country, — and the facility of these people in getting along with it.

Margaret found a letter from Flora Mackenzie waiting her, next day, when we walked round to the Place Vendôme and inquired at the banker's. I also got yours in answer to my Queenstown packet. You encourage me in detail, also in gossip; understanding with me that the Saxon of it, — the God-sib, — is a good thing, and nothing less than the human interest and sympathy that comes honestly and heartily from the divine.

So I will tell you — that is, I will tell into the other side of my own thoughts — about the letter that Margaret brought me to read, after we got back to the hotel and had untied our little parcels of cakes and pralines, and our baskets of fresh raspberries, and had called for "limonade gazeuse," which is lemon soda-water in a siphon, and had made ourselves comfortable in a broad, balconied window, with our cool lunch.

Flora wrote from Saratoga.

They had gone there for the gay race month. She was brimmingly happy in a new heart-of-rose evening silk, and a real, soft, gray camel's hair walking dress. Also Uncle Andrew had given Harry five hundred dollars for his twenty-first birthday; and the very first thing he did with it was to buy her a pair of "perfectly sweet diamond solitaires." "Not large, you know: of course he could n't afford that out of it, but the purest little twinkles you ever saw, in the new nail-head setting. By the way, Madge, no girl ought to wear these settings who has flat ears! It takes a little curly dint for them to nestle in; or else they do look painfully nail-y! Was n't it just like him? A perfect shame of extravagance; but so generous!" And then again, farther on, there was a paragraph like this: — "I must tell you what it is, Madge; don't run too much into moralizings and fine thinkings with Harry; have n't you got into a dreadfully exalted set on board the Nova Zembla? Men don't like *tête montée*, of any sort: and the *serious* craze least of all! They just want a girl to be nice, and charming, and sweet-tempered,

and bright, and gently jolly ; just as you always were. If you go and spoil, you'll spoil all our dreams ; and nobody ever dreamt anything half so nice as we two, — we three, is n't it — Madge ? have laid out together. Did n't we *determine*, year ago, that we *would* live it all out, and that we would n't be different by and by, as people are, and let it change ? And now if you go and turn out different, — Madge, *do* hold on ! Can't a girl ever stay ? ”

She told me not to read it at the minute, but to lay it by till after lunch. So it was after she had gone back to her mother, and I was waiting with my hat on to go with them presently into the old church of Saint Roch close by, that I looked it over.

You see ? Here is a girl not yet waked up, — determined *not* to wake, but to have her morning dream out ; and Margaret is waking. She is opening her eyes suddenly, almost into the full face of the sun. She hardly knows whether it is most gladness or pain.

I suppose — as MacDonald says — the Lord is “making” Harry Mackenzie, too ; and this Flora. But I am sure He is making Margaret faster ; and I cannot help wishing that He may not see fit that the one making shall depend much upon the other. It *seems* as if one could see that it would only be a pain and a hindrance. And when there are such better possible things ! I am afraid I should be very willing that those two, — that girl and boy, — should let their director salvation go, and take their own way farther round, among their kind, a while. Saratoga is full, at this minute, of charming and bright and jolly girls ; I hope Harry Mackenzie may have a very good time among them. I should n't care if some old Laban brought along a Rachel all ready with her dowry. I am glad that Margaret Regis is away out here. I think her step-mother is an extremely wise woman.

We went into the old church of Saint Roch ; just queer and ancient, — that is all. Behind the altar is an inner chamber, which contains a representation in — what shall I say ? practical arrangement — of the Crucifixion. A certain scenic dis-

position of imitation rocks piled up against the back, for the Hill of Calvary, and among them, at the summit, the three crosses planted; of which the central one, with its Figure, shows through an opposite arch in the reredos to the eyes of worshippers in the body of the church. I suppose there are high days when the whole is thrown open.

It looks strange and trivial to us; and yet to thoughts un-stored with any association of period, place, and mode, — to those who only know the holy Story as it is told to them in images and pictures, — through times in which old churches have stood like arks, keeping the sacred signs of a reality which submitted itself, like the Sign of Jonah, to a swallowing up in darkness for a while, — this system of emblems and positive presentations is and has been form and showing for the childish apprehension that would have let the invisible go.

At first, the effigiation shocked me with its rude literalness; then it said to me simply what the words say, — though in raised letters as for the blind, — “Christ was crucified.” It has said that to thousands of simple souls to whom words would have conveyed little.

After all, what is this thrill and touch of words but a subtler sign of what forever clothes itself, because unclothed it is ineffable? Like the sign made in that Life and Death itself?

CHAPTER XVI.

A TALK ; AND A TRUSTING.

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 It was a glorious morning when we set off for Versailles. A morning to see Paris in.

In the three days since our arrival we had moved about very little. The portmanteau had come; that bothered and occupied me the first twenty-four hours; then there was the banking business; and there were — the shops!

You are a woman, and will understand. We did have to buy things. What else are the shops, and the manufactures, and the imports, and all the great system and economy of trade, which men think worth *their* while, for? Because it comes to an end with us, — because we have to deal with the grocer and the milliner and the dry goods retailer, in the last little details of daily result and need, they have such a big way of looking over their desks and ledgers into *our* world, and saying as they see us buzz about, doing our duty, — “women — shopping!” As if they were so many Aunt Betsies, with their “Janet! donkies!”

It was nice that we could do so much right there between our hotel and Place Vendôme, along the narrow, crowded old Rue St. Honoré.

We got on best in the shops where they did not pretend to accommodate us with our own language. There were bright little gilt letters stuck up against the glass in every half-dozen window, — “English Spoken;” but almost always, a letter or two had dropped off. “Of course,” said Emery Ann, “it’s always *broken* English.”

Where there was nothing but French, we used a phrase or two, and fell into the natural language of signs; and they attended and divined, not being taken up with sentences. But the minute they began to speak English to us, we gave up.

We found a delightful little body,—a Madame Dashwood, so her sign said. Probably a French girl who had married an English husband; but, however, she spoke only French to us; out of delicate compliment, perhaps, to our “Eskers.”

She had all the most fascinating little ways of her class and nation; she showed us things “*charmantes*,” and “*bien bon marché*,” she stood with her finger laid beside her lip and her pretty head on one side, like a little bird considering, when some doubt arose of color or fit; and then her inspiration, and her “*Mais, madame, voilà!*” as she produced something quite indisputable, or gave a dexterous suggestion of arrangement to the article in hand, were enough to have sold her whole stock out, she was so bewitching in doing it.

The girls got lovely white jackets and shirt waists, with such exquisite embroidery and needlework laid out upon them! So many little finishing bands and welts, and stitchings! The things had a look of everlasting wear just put upon their filmy material by these stays and edges, so delicately firm,—so re-folded and re-woven upon themselves.

Margaret bought also a black lace sacque, all wrought in fern sprays, with borders of fine arabesque lines running through them. Mrs. Regis surprised me by quietly purchasing one or two caps of finest point and Mâlines; just light little top pieces, with simple knots of lavender-gray ribbon; and she ordered some of valenciennes, whose simple triple quillings round the Marie-Stuart point should replace the tarletane rolls of the widow's cap almost imperceptibly as to general effect.

“I have thought of this for a good while,” she observed to me. “But it is so hard to make a change at home. And in traveling, caps are such a consideration! Tarletane crushes, and is done with; these can be carried in small compass, and will always come out fresh.”

It gave me a queer feeling, and upset that original, deeply impressed idea of her, as a woman almost born for a widow's cap; at any rate, one who once in it, had made it a part of her identity, to be known by to the day of her death.

But this about the shops is only in passing. I did not always go. I found a few quiet hours each day, when the others were

out, in which I could "make fast," as the sailors say, something of what I had been "hauling in;" you, away there in Dearwood, serving as my belaying pin.

We drove out to Versailles in two open carriages. We changed the order of our usual arrangement; the girls took fancy to go together.

"Why don't we, ever?" Edith wondered suddenly.

Then it was Mrs. Regis's suggestion that Emery Ann should be detailed to matronize them, and that herself and I should drive together. Emery Ann looked very suitable, as a sort of English "bonne" or "gouvernante;" it would not have occurred to Mrs. Regis to let Margaret come in with us, and take Miss Tudor in her daughter's place. And I think, too, that her perception of fitness was a nice one, every way. I am sure Emery Ann liked it better so, and the girls are never tired of her.

Sunshine belongs to Paris. It is a city made for brightness; it has no natural relation to anything else. It was full of sunshine to-day. Its clean, airy, open squares, its splendid avenues, its tossing, shimmering fountains, its gardens and trees, its statues and obelisks, were all bathed in clear, glad light, and looked fresh and perfect, as if created of the very day.

We passed along by the Palace and Garden of the Tuileries, across the garden front, through the Place de la Concorde, where the obelisk of Luxor stands in its slender might of beauty, — (how difficult to remember that the guillotine stood here once, when it was the Place of the Revolution, and noble and beautiful heads fell down into the horrible basket, and blood streamed instead of sparkling waters!) where the shaded avenues on the one hand run directly to the palace front, and on the other the Champs Elysées stretch away in long green aisles exactly opposite, so that Napoleon used to sit at his windows and look straight out to the Arch of Triumph in the Place of the Star.

Then, along the river side, and beyond the walls, battered with the shells of the last Revolution, and through outskirts yet lying in blackened ruin here and there, by the villages of Issy and Sevres, — the narrow streets alive with a life quite strange

to us; men in blouses, women in white caps, houses and hotels that looked to us more as if they had come out of pictures than as if pictures had come to us from them,— we drove, and gazed, and enjoyed, reveling in the sunshine and the novelty; the girls' faces glancing out at us from their carriage, as we sometimes drove alongside or passed each other, brimful of wonder and excitement, and unspoken "Only see!"s. Emery Ann sat straight up and made a business of everything.

Mrs. Regis and I had a talk. The road was long, and there was time. She began rather unexpectedly.

"I think you are in Margaret's confidence, somewhat, Miss Strong?"

"Margaret talks to me a little," I answered; wondering how far I was to be called to account, or cross-examined. I was neither.

"I am glad of it," said Margaret's step-mother; and her tone was genuine and kind.

"Thank you," said I, heartily.

It was the first hearty feeling I had had toward her. I have told you truly all my pre-judgments, Rose; it was the right way. You shall have my honest after-judgments also, even if they shall be judgment and sentence upon myself.

"Margaret does not quite understand me. It is hardly possible, perhaps, that she should. Yet there is n't much to understand. I am not deep or intricate,— any more than human nature always is. I am not conscious of any double motives. I am placed in rather a peculiar position, and I wish to act for every one's real interest. I do not set up for any very exalted generosities or perfect self-devotion; but it is my nature to wish that things should go well with people; as far at least, as I can see, or control. I have not thought they would go well with Margaret, if she married Harry Mackenzie. I am thoroughly comfortable about Helen."

I could not help it; I could not turn it out of my head,— the idea that she put right into it again. She must be thoroughly comfortable. And she could not be, unless it went tolerably well with people. As far, at least, as she could see.

Well,— why was n't that charity? Could she expect to love

her neighbor better than that? I boxed my own ears inwardly outwardly, I waited calmly, — listening. There was nothing for me to reply to.

“Margaret’s fortune would be nothing to a fellow like Harry Mackenzie, though I dare say he thinks it would. Such irresponsible people always think everything is provided for, if they can see a few hundred — or thousand — dollars ahead; or even if their bills are paid up, and they can begin on a clean score. It would be sure not to last. They would be back on their friends again in five years. I do not mean it shall be so. It is just what Colonel Regis left me power for.”

“And Margaret would rather lose her money,” said I, “than give him up for the sake of it. There is a temptation to her sense of nobleness and fidelity in the very alternative.”

“Yes. But to *him*? That is what I have been waiting for. If it does not happen” —

“You will consent? You will make the best of it? If Margaret knew that” —

“I never meant not to consent. I do not mean to take her money away from her. But I shall never tell her I approve of such a marriage. And I will not let him spend her little twenty five thousand dollars. I have the power to secure it to her, as well as to refuse it; indeed, *by* refusing it. I provided for that — and at the same time put so much quite out of my own hands, — before I sailed from home. It is in a separate trust, — a deed of my own; — that, and five thousand more, my wedding gift, — to be held for her in case she forfeits under the will by marrying without my formal, written consent; which, given however, would cancel it, and return my own to me again. I made up my mind to tell you this,” she added, with one of her smiles that she can make gloriously sweet, — “because there is no need that you should think worse of me than the truth. I have come to value your good opinion. Besides, you are thrown intimately with both of us, at a critical time; and you have influence. It is best you should understand us both; and I feel sure that I can” —

I thought she was going to say, “I can trust you.” Why did she not finish? Or was it only my discretion that she

trusted? I saw that she refrained from binding me, even by implication.

"If Margaret knew this," — I began again, and again broke off, asking a question instead. "Did it ever occur to you, Mrs. Regis, that this might not be so deep a thing with her as she supposes, — as she chooses to believe, — for truth and nobleness' sake, perhaps?"

"You think she might change? Yes, — she might have another girl's fancy," said Mrs. Regis; and there was a tinge of bitter slighting in her words. She went on with a suddenly different tone.

"It is well that she does not know. Let her wait, and let him prove himself. She is safe while she waits. Colonel Regis distrusted early marriages. He had seen so much of them in the army, where boys marry on their first commission."

"And suppose something more real shows her to herself more plainly, while yet she feels bound?"

I could not stop to think, though her words sent glimmers down hidden avenues of motive, — hidden, I believe, even from herself. I thought afterward; then, I spoke; for the opportunity might not return.

"I hope she would not come to me about it," said Mrs. Regis, hastily. "I might object again."

I remembered what Emery Ann said, about "leaving straws unput."

"I think you would be bound not to shut your eyes," I said. "The responsibility would be there in any case."

"I can do nothing with fine subtleties, and shades of circumstance," said Mrs. Regis. "I can understand a positive duty, or a positive meanness. I can do one, and put the other out of my power. It is easier to do things once for all, than to be having little separate battles with separate little temptations to be selfish. I have told you how I have settled the money-question. I have trusted you."

She said it now, and held me bound. I only said, "I thank you, Mrs. Regis. I think you have been generous." And we both fell silent again.

When a person gives you knowledge of an act, with its motive as far as they recognize it in themselves, something in you, — something in me, at any rate, — follows the clew deeper, and asks just such questions as one asks of one's own hidden, far-away feeling and intent.

Mrs. Regis had done, — with a determination to be just, and to defend herself from possible temptation, — a thing that was certainly generous. It was a brave kind of cutting away her own retreat. But is that the *very* bravest and truest? To stand fast when one might go back, — to know that one means so to stand fast, come what will, — is the grander thing; just as it is grander to bear life than to rush on death with a reckless impulse. She was a nobler woman than I had given her credit for being; her sense of "comfortableness" for those whose comfort she could affect, reached farther than many people's. It was very thorough. There was no danger of her grasping to herself in the little, mean, surface-fashion that some do. She was not the common woman to oppose her step-daughter, just that she might profit by the forfeiture of a disobedience. But she must have broad margin to be generous in. There must be easy-chairs for everybody. She would carefully enlarge her phylacteries against the demon Self, — she would widen all borders that could be widened with facility. She could do it here. Her husband had left plenty of *money* for them all.

But what if she had to make room by crowding back her own life? What if it should come to one thing, that one might have, and not another? What when the question should concern something that might dawn to her only by a setting into darkness for some one else, — for some one younger, to whom the night should be longer? Would a greater nobleness than this caring for her neighbor *with* herself, and that she might be free to care for self, — triumph at last in Mrs. Regis's nature, and lift it up once and forever to a loftier plane?

She looked young to-day. Madame Dashwood had changed her bonnet-cap to correspond with the style she had now adopted for home wear. She had put in just one of those little crimped hems that are beginning to be worn by everybody; and to make up the fullness lost with the white rolls,

Mrs. Regis had slightly *crépé'd* her beautiful hair. The expression of the widow's cap, becoming as it had been, had added ten years to her apparent age. I could see now, what I had not supposed before, that she was undoubtedly, by several years, younger than myself, and at this moment she did not look more than thirty-five.

There was time enough, — there was reason and circumstance enough, — for her yet to find an experience that perhaps she had hitherto missed ; a mightier sweep, and search, and test through her nature, might come upon her than had come before in all the smooth procession of her half-lived years.

What had been in Mrs. Regis's mind, or had come there, in her talk to me ?

Had she half hoped, at first, that Margaret might learn, — or get an intuition, if I knew, — that there was no forfeiture to avoid, no condition to wait for ? Was she half willing to let it lisp around to her, if it came in my way to deal with a troubled, yet unrelinquished determination ? Would she leave it to me at discretion, to guide and suggest accordingly, — to see that Margaret's misconception of herself should not go too far toward utter alienation, or her stubborn, resentful waiting embitter and needlessly waste the years of her youth ? Might I say to Margaret, perhaps, — " Have courage. Do nothing foolishly ; but tell your mother plainly, if it must be so, what you resolve. I do not think she will do you any wrong. I believe you and Harry Mackenzie may trust her final generosity " ? Might she not, with natural feeling, be impelled to clear herself with some one, — recoil, after all, from playing to the end the ungracious part she had attempted for Margaret's good ? Was this it ? And — was this *all* ?

But, again, if this knowledge, — that there was no grand renunciation to make, — no faithfulness to her word to vindicate with the loss of her money, — no need of being " good for what she could get for it," — were to react upon Margaret's self-consciousness to show her how little other vitality there had been in her persistence ; were to leave her free from this reflex influence to measure her own direct feeling and find it *wanting*, — what then ? Did Mrs. Regis suddenly discern that this was what she could not quite heartily desire ?

I do not think she did, plainly. She wanted to be comfortable about Margaret; comfortable about her life as passed out from her own farther responsibility. "About," was just the word. It was as standing in that which was left undisturbed to herself, that she would not have a jar come upon her own serenity from a break or a discord elsewhere that she should first have filled or prevented. As Emery Ann used to say, when "getting things off her mind," — she must "do up her chores and then take comfort." But she did not enter in *with* Margaret, and discern from the inner side the very truest and best for her, and feel her own comfort identical with the girl's real, most comprehensive need. That comes only of living in the spirit. That kind of sympathy and ministry goes forth only by prayer and fasting.

So when the indistinct apprehension crossed Mrs. Regis's mind at my words, that a full knowledge of her intentions might set Margaret free in a different and less immediate sense, there came with it the indistinct impulse also, to bind me with those words, "I have trusted you."

Margaret was "safe while she waited."

Let Harry Mackenzie prove himself.

I began to feel a great desire for an interior service toward both of them, — mother and daughter. I thought I had an insight of each that was thus far only partly open to themselves. I do not think any going between with words, or information, from and about each other, would do the least bit of such a service. I had been made to feel the springs, — and I felt them by the thrill of the self-same good and evil in myself, — that perhaps I might touch them when the times came; the "chances," that were still as Emery Ann had said, "not my business." I was so glad of that!

Sitting beside Mrs. Regis after our talk ended, words came into my mind like a message of new meaning.

"He maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flame of fire." As we live into our angelhood, Rose, — and you know what I mean by that; as we live the life and do the errands of the kingdom in ever such weak or little ways, — we find out more body; are that we are set to work in the unseen. He maketh.

us spirits. He shows us a director and solemnner dealing than by mere act, or word, or circumstance. He takes us in toward where He is Himself; He gives us something of his own closeness to apprehend by; to love and serve by. And his ministers He makes a flame of fire. Bearers and kindlers, by that lighted upon them as a tongue from his own infinite Heart-blaze, of the fire of a true life to souls; and so helpers to the fusing of the outward form of living into his own true and perfect circumstance. In the thought of this real and only ministering, how we need to fast from the small and the distracting, and pray at the inner doors that they may be opened to us!

My "chance" did not fully come then. I did not feel that it was ready, though I returned in one word to the subject, just as we drove into the stately approach to Versailles.

The thing I said was just what Margaret had said to me. I did not *say* it, though; I put it as a question.

"Don't you think, Mrs. Regis, that these 'conditions' are a block between you, altering and separating your relations? Don't they make it that Margaret has n't a *mother* to go to, so much as a guardian, an imposer of terms? If you were to tell her what you have told me, would n't you gain the *real* influence which these provisions destroy by their very intention to secure? Would n't you be able to enter in, with real knowledge and sympathy, to Margaret's wants, and live her life with her?"

I spoke rapidly. I wanted to say it out.

Mrs. Regis answered from *away off*.

"I do not think I could. I do not understand such things. It seems to me we have all enough to do to live our own lives. I can advise Margaret. I can use authority as well as I know how. And I can provide for her, even against her willfulness, or my own change of mind. I do not think more can be expected of me."

Here we came upon the Boulevard de la Reine.

So that ended it.

Another way in which the putting down of things in this post-fact fashion does me good, Rose, is in the look I get at them myself at a farther and clearer focus. Day by day journalizing

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Another way in which the putting down of things in this post-fact fashion does me good, Rose, is in the look I get at them myself at a farther and clearer focus. Day by day journalizing

would not help me so; for I should never go back and read it over again. Our inward sight changes, I fancy, like the outward, as we grow older, — which inwardly should be wiser, — and we see things better holding them a little way off. I never did care very much to set down the day's life while it was raw. I would n't even keep my traveling memoranda so. And a journal is *never* kept for one's self. If I were not going to send it to you, I would not keep it anyway. I should hate the spiritual Mrs. Grundy that I should feel looking over my shoulder, if I could not think of some one real and personal as I write it.

But I am not very far behindhand, either, — in time. We have only been five weeks in Europe, after all. It is the *things* that fill up, and keep me following after. I shall catch up presently, in spite of my theory. Well, then, we will try the *other* advantage, — of some instant impressions. I am not bigoted, — which is, *sworn* (you can see the swear in the word) — to one idea. We shall have two kinds, — and a mixture, — before we get through; like Hans Andersen's milk-pitcher when it took sausage. "Milk and sausage, and sausage broth," in our "Book of Europe," which you say you are going to have bound (for private circulation between us two), and call "Patience Strong's Story of Over the Way." Very good; but who shall be the bookbinder? I'm afraid he'll stop to read. Never mind; he'll only think it is a made-up story that could n't get printed. And what lots of stories *are* made up, that if they actually grew out of facts in the form in which they come to the counters, would be base, unblushing betrayals — of what no human creature could possibly ever have known to betray!

How do you know I am not making up? Play that I am.

I could not make up Versailles, though.

How small the carriages looked, that we saw going up and down this splendid avenue! In its vast breadth, they were like tiny toys. There is something in these great spaces that great people have made for themselves to move and dwell in, that I should think would have continually turned back upon them, showing them that they were not great, but very little after all. The gilt coaches that I saw afterward in the Musée de Voitures, made it seem still more like petty play. A man or a woman,

with all that either can be surrounded with, does not take up so very much room in the world. Their own environments widen out into a kind of satire.

But there is another way of looking at it, also. Take away the coaches, and forget about the person; and think of that which reaches out and makes its sphere in a wide state and expression, and the very diminutiveness of the visible presence emphasizes the power. The heart of things has nothing to do with space. The days of the giants were not the days of the grandest humanity. Worlds themselves, turn upon the pivot of a point.

The thought of this traces itself back to the awful, the unspeakable; the hiding and the showing of the Divine.

Behind all circles of law and of creation, — far within all outward vastness, — the central Life-Point, — the I-Am.

Whose coming forth, even, is not in circumference; for the Holy Ghost descended in a form like a dove. The Lord was upon the earth in the form of a man.

Under the poorest earthly semblance, lies that upon which even semblance forms itself, and wherein it finds its power to touch us; we wonder at the thrill in us, till we feel back by it to the everlasting truth that it was born in.

I leave you here, as the stories do, upon a threshold.

CHAPTER XVII.

PLEASURES AND PALACES.

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. THREE grand avenues run together into the great Place d'Armes, from which the palace gates open, upon its front. The middle approach is the Avenue de Paris. Right and left are the avenues of St. Cloud and Sceaux. The Boulevard de la Reine is aside from all, skirting the park on the right or north side, and passing, a little way down, into the Avenue de Trianon, which starts out from the Alley of the Fountains at the northeast front of the pleasure-grounds. The Trianons lie to the northeast, communicating with the centre of the palace grounds by the Queen's Alley.

We were driven direct along the boulevard and avenue, past the palace and park quite away on our left, to the gateway of the Trianons, where we alighted, and joined a party just forming in its turn, with a fresh guide, for the seeing of the interior of the larger Villa.

We were led through sumptuous rooms, — suite after suite; royal bed-chambers, — halls hung with pictures, which the guide, in tolerably slow and very sonorous French, explained to us, but which I must skip with you, as nothing really stopped or held me fast, and nobody had time to stop if they would; through apartments splendidly fitted up for Queen Victoria's visit to the late Emperor, but which for some reason she did not occupy; into the Malachite room, where stands the enormous basin of that precious mineral given by the Emperor of Russia to Napoleon First; and came swiftly out again from all, with very confused impressions, into the open air and around to the "Musée de Voitures," which is between the Great and Little Trianons.

Here are the state carriages, blazing with gilding and color, — gaudy with silk and velvet, — and the splendid horse trappings, heavy with ornament, used by different monarchs from the beginning of the First Empire.

“Puss in Boots, and the Marquis of Carabas !” said Emery Ann, to me, as we walked round the alley.

They did look like those old red and yellow pictures in the fairy tales. The Old World has n’t quite got out of the tencent story-books yet. Are we, in the New World, just getting into them ?

How can I take you by the hand, Rose, and lead you right into the pleasance of the Little Trianon ?

You turn off from the large Villa through an avenue called the Alley of the Two Trianons, which runs across a corner toward the public avenue of Saint Antoine ; from the alley you go through a gateway, and are forthwith lost in a lovely wilderness, in which you can only follow what seems the broadest track, or the groups of saunterers finding their way like yourself ; unless, indeed, you trust to chance for what you may come to, and choose, as we did, to lose yourself away from the crowd.

Deep glades of green, — broken rocks picturesquely left or planted, — clear water-trickles tumbling into cascades, — still little hideaway nooks which you wonder if any of the other people have found, or if Marie Antoinette herself ever knew of ; simple little bridges, and dark, overhung pools ; intricate foot-paths, surprises of tiny pavilions or rustic seats, wild flowers spotting the soft turf and cherished in their own wildness ; sweetest little harebells, and patches where you know in spring the ground would be blue with violets ; birds singing softly to the stir of the woods and the tinkle of the dropping waters ; — what sort of little buried Paradise have you come into, straight away from those gorgeous palace fronts and bedizened saloons and the museum of gilded equipages ? You have lost sight, too, of sentinels and guides ; they have turned you in and left you to yourself, as far as you can perceive. You are getting just what the king and queen and their fine people came away for ; the best thing they had among it all.

Suddenly, if there is no one to tell you, — and nobody told us, — you *happen* upon a house; dark, low, rustic-built, with overhanging gallery and latticed windows, — still, like a tomb, and you know that this is Marie Antoinette's Swiss Cottage. A little way off, down in a hollow where they made a stream run once that is all stagnant now — a wheel hangs motionless, and the tangling vines and branches grow over it, and climb into the casements and time-rents of Louis's mill. Then you go on and come to the dairy, through whose windows you can look at the very tables where the milk-pans stood or the butter was moulded; and all the time, the hollow hush and the darkness are saying to you what they said among the marbles in Westminster Abbey, — that the "pretty lady," like Mary Stuart, "has been dead a long while."

Wandering on by a long pathway under a bank of grass and flowers, and shaded with old trees, we came all at once out of the wildness and seclusion into open parterres blazing with garden bloom; where a fountain played, and white statues stood against the dense green boundary, where the sun streamed along the flower beds and drew up into the air a heavy, sweet perfume; and clouds of butterflies, — those creatures made to express pure ecstasy, with only just body enough to hold two wings together, — wavered and tossed in it deliriously; where palace-walls, — dingy white, now, these walls of the old pleasure palace, — rose up beyond the green; where the past looked dead again by signs that could keep no life in them like woods and waters, and the growth and blossom were once more the growth and blossom of to-day, — splendid and luxurious, yet still most exquisitely beautiful; and so we got back into the world again out of the dim, sad, delicious dream; and we passed the gates as if they had been the gates of sleep, and found ourselves outside, awake, and our carriages waiting.

Down the long, flanking avenues again, into the public boulevard; then stopping at a side entrance, we crossed a mall and a kind of open park, and came to the vast paved quadrangle, on three sides of which the front and wings of the Château stretch themselves, and on the fourth the great sculptured Victory-pillars make the main gateway opening down into the Place of Arms.

Inside, colossal statues guard the approach with presences of the past; knights, marshals, cardinals, constables, generals; Bayard, Richelieu, Turenne, the Great Condé; in the midst, a bronze equestrian statue of Louis XIV.

Am I getting guide-booky? I only tell what it needed no guide-book to arrest the thought to. As we walked up the great space, our steps measured to us with some fatigue its wide extent, and we felt the grand proportions of figures that could look grand there.

But we recollected, among these, the different presence that filled this great court-yard, when the populace streamed out from Paris to mob their king and queen in their own palace; when fierce, dreadful faces were uplifted to those windows from a wild, surging crowd, and horrid voices shouted hateful cries; when with furious persistence they called forth the poor, beautiful queen upon that balcony only to insult her; and then burst in, murdering her guards, and forced themselves to her presence and the king's in their private rooms, raging and threatening, till the gentle monarch, expostulating patiently with his "children," promised to return to the Tuileries and take up his abode among his dear Parisians.

We went in upon the south side. I climbed the wide staircase with a bewildered feeling of not knowing in the least what part of the palace world we should come up into; I found out afterward, by studying over the plan, where we had been, what little corner we had seen, and what we had missed and left unknown as much as if it had all been in Nineveh, instead of under one roof with the bit — the immense, exhausting bit — we traversed.

We got up into the second floor of the south wing. I don't see now, exactly, from the plan in Baedeker, how we got there from the court-yard. But some of Baedeker's plans have solid walls across where doorways are. I shall undertake to tell nothing but what I do see, in a plain remembrance.

We came into the long gallery of sculptures and busts; there is another beneath it which we passed by in ascending; they run down the wing, almost its entire length. Here was everybody that ever had been, one would think; the marble faces

looked down on either ~~hand~~ from bracket and pedestal, thronging upon us without pause, so as no human interest or recognition could take in more than one here or there, to be replaced and obliterated in the mind almost instantly.

"Are you realizing your history?" I said to Edith. It was what the Atlantic Ocean had been to our geography.

There is a feeling you cannot get rid of, as you plan and pursue your journeyings, that you are somehow stepping about on a map all the time, instead of what the map is made from; and in these great galleries you travel down the pages of the years, that you have read—or skipped; and the white apparitions look forth at you with a bewildering recognition or a yet more confounding reproach. I comforted myself with what Sismondi said to Catherine Sedgwick, when she set him right upon a point of history. "For me, madame, the rears two kinds of history; that which I have written and forgotten, and that which I never wrote, and never knew."

What you live,—or what you trace out carefully with a connected interest and motive; what you *work* in,—that *is*, and perhaps remains; nothing else. For this reason, I think Europe, with its repositories of all art and history, is an Encyclopedia to go to for definite purposes of research; not a picture-book or a story, that one can run through from end to end at a single dash.

"There's crowds of 'em, is n't there?" said Emery Ann—"And I presume they've all had a hand in it."

"In what?" asked Edith; though I suppose she understood. She likes to get the whole from Emery Ann.

"In the A-apple-pie;" returned Emery Ann. "In the making, and baking, and—partly—in the eating up. They've had their mouthful, and gone. I know that; though I don't know who half of them were, or where they took their bite."

"They keep all they can, over here," she said to me afterward, "don't they? But to think of the worldfuls that never could be saved up!"

The brimming, whirling globe! That has been filled and emptied of life and action by the worldful! It was a keen word of Emery Ann's; it made you think of ages measured

out and poured away into space. Yes; the inapprehensible mass that remains, and these wonderful kings' treasures of them, in record, sign, memorial,—only hint at the infinite stream of event, over which the mist of its own upworking has to be let fall.

We came out at the end of the wing into a corner room; the Room of 1830; where the walls are covered with large pictures of scenes of the Revolution of July; Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, arriving at Hotel de Ville, and Lafayette standing bareheaded at the entrance,—his proclamation as Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom; his oath of fidelity before the Chambers; his giving of the flags to the National Guard.

Here was where we began to *remember*; here was history made since some of us were born; we stayed longer in this room than in almost any other, though the pictures, as works of art, are not very much to stay for.

Then we left it by a door upon the same side as that by which we had entered from the gallery of sculptures and busts; and found ourselves in a parallel gallery, which took us back again along the immense wing to the main structure.

This is the "Gallery of Battles"; filled with modern paintings, glowing with color and action, representing great war scenes, old and recent, from Ary Scheffer's "Battle of Tolbiac," whatever that was, in 496, to Austerlitz, and Jena, and Friedland; these last two by Vernet. Our own siege of Yorktown in America, by the army under Rochambeau and Washington, covers one great space; and directly opposite is the picture of Joan of Arc raising the siege of Orleans. Neither of these are marked with "stars" in Baedeker, but they kept me by the interest of their subjects, and I was pleased that they hung over against each other.

Turning, through small chambers opening the one from the other, around the angle of the wing with the main edifice toward the front, we came into the room to which I shall always go back to stand in recollection, as long as I remember Versailles.

It is the Room of the Coronation of Napoleon; that is, the room where David's great picture of the Coronation hangs.

The Emperor, just crowned himself, is placing the Imperial diadem with his own hands on Josephine's head.

The splendid groups in the dim, magnificent cathedral, — the trailing robes, the priestly grandeur of canonicals, the gathered glory of the regalia, — all these but frame in the real picture; the act, the moment, that lives there, as all acts and moments live, whether there is a David to paint them on a canvas or not.

We all stood before it, silent. We were not looking at a canvas; we were entered in to that moment of history and truth.

We say sometimes of some high crisis, — some point when life makes itself illustrative and dramatic, and draws to its full expression all type and surrounding of beauty, or solemnity, or tenderness, — “How brief! how instantly ended and passed by! How quickly the marriage-ring is put on, and the bride, in her white veil, gone down from the altar! How soon the flowers are put aside, and the prayer finished, and the beautiful dead face shut away!”

There are minutes so holy and so heartfelt, — so grand or so heroic, — that it seems as if they ought to be arrested in their dearness, or sacredness, or sublimity, until the long procession of the generations should all pass by to feel and see; and so, the painter and the sculptor work to keep these scenes as if they were alive; and we look at the statue or the picture, and forget that only because the moment *is* forever alive, it can be so put down. Not to *keep* it, but to show that it cannot die, — that it is an eternity, in a point of time, — is the story put in marble or in color.

“Napoleon *always* crowned her in his heart,” said Margaret to me, after our long gazing.

“And that moment never was — never could be — taken away from her,” I answered. “She stood there at the height of her life; and in the focus of its showing. She came no more out of it when she came away from Napoleon’s palace, than she did when she walked down the aisle of Notre Dame that day. Whatever really has been, always is. That is what they paint it for.”

On the other wall, is another of the living moments; Napoleon giving the Eagles to his Army. That is what is alive to

this instant in the hearts of Frenchmen ; but the crowning of Josephine is alive in the heart of the world.

I think there is some picture on the side between the doors, of the second empress-ship ; something about poor Marie Louise, whose part of the story was one of those riddles, real on the one side, — or at least standing for the reality of life to one, — and a mere dead appendix to the other. One hardly notices it, wherever it is, after beholding the first, except to sigh over the inexplicability.

Emery Ann hates all second marriages, and people who make them. Of course she has no patience with Napoleon.

She said to me, — “ I wonder what they make of it ! I wonder what people expect, if they believe in the other world, and finding each other again, and being just as they were ! ”

“ They won’t be just as they *were n’t*,” said I.

“ Well, that’s a comfort ! ” she said, with emphasis. “ They’ll have considerable to pick out, though, anyway, of this world’s stitches. And I’d full rather not be set to rip, as soon as I get there.”

And with her bonnet exalted, she walked along into the “ Little Apartments of Marie Antoinette.”

From these, through an ante-chamber, we reached the long, splendid gallery of Louis the Fourteenth, stretching across the whole garden front of the palace, and overlooking the wide, sunny parterres, and the orangery ; the alleys, the fountains, the basins, the bosquets, the statues, and all the interminable loveliness of the park and pleasure-grounds, lying fair before us as we stood in the deep windows, — as fair as it did before the Bourbons two hundred years ago.

We glanced in at the sleeping chamber of Louis Fourteenth, opening from this gallery ; and saw the high, broad, square, old-tapestried bed. Opposite to the gallery runs the balcony of the bed-chamber, looking into the Palace Court, from which the famous announcement, — “ *Le roi est mort*,” — “ *Vive le roi !* ” sounded to the people at the hour he died. Upon which, also, the unhappy Marie Antoinette stood forth to be jeered at on the night of horror, — the night of the 5th of October, 1789.

We were tired out. We were deadened to splendor,—almost to pathos and association. We wished there had not been so many kings; even that there never had been so many statues and pictures. We went through the apartments of Louis Sixteenth, down the north side of the main building; reached the grand staircase opposite to that which we had ascended in the south angle, and returned to the great court; crossed wearily to the Victory gate, and walked out to wait under the trees of the boulevard for our “voiture” to come and find us as we had ordered.

Speechless with fatigue, I sat there on a bench, and thought how sight-seeing was like living. Eager, full, beautiful, wonderful, for a while; then one begins to ache, in the midst of one’s pursuit and desire; suddenly there is a great deal too much of it, and we can do and receive no more; we creep gladly into a shady corner, and wait for our carriage to take us away.

The next day, our last in Paris, we went to the Church of the Madeleine; a suitable sequence to our Versailles visits, I thought; seeing that it was interrupted in the building by the great Revolution,—was changed in intent by the First Napoleon to a Temple of Glory, and finally continued by Louis Eighteenth as a church of expiation, in memory of Louis XVI., Louis XVII., Marie Antoinette, and Madame Elizabeth. One wonders, however, whether the “expiatory” dedication was intended in penitence for the selfish intrigues of the Count de Provence himself, or for the repose of the souls of his unfortunate relations.

Emery Ann would not go. “I can’t take things so rapid,” said she. “I’ll stay at home and let my mind settle, and pack the trunks. I feel now, almost, as if the top of my head wanted new shingling.” And with that, she tossed out, vehemently, the contents of a square box that we keep for “transients.” It is a very queer, and a very certain thing, that although one wears a traveling-dress, and takes out nothing but essentials from her luggage, during a few days of temporary stay in a place, the whole “pack,” pretty nearly, has to be gone over again in

getting ready for another move and a different — prospective — stop. We repacked in Liverpool; we repacked in London; we repacked in Dover; we repacked here. Everything has to be on the top, and everything gets to the bottom in the process. We shall begin to be happy when we get to the mule-traveling among the mountains, and take nothing but bags and shawls. You never *want* more than a bagful anywhere; the trouble is that it has to be a *different* bagful.

A knock came at the door, and the white-frilled cap and good-natured face of the femme de chambre looked in:—

“Est-ce que madame a sonné?” she asked, for certainly the fifteenth time that we had n’t, in the four days we had been there.

“No! It est-n’t que!” said Emery Ann, shortly, with her head in the trunk.

“We must rest again when we get to Switzerland,” I said to myself. “Edith looks pale, and Emery Ann is cross; cross enough to get it into French, — which is equivalent to a certain disguised style of swearing; and I, — well, I feel also mentally dyspeptic, as if I had swallowed a century or two in a most unwholesome hurry.”

And yet see how little we had done!

I might as well tell you that the Massachusetts State House is approached by three broad and lofty flights of terraced steps, and is surmounted by a great dome of beautiful proportions, as to remind you of the exquisite architecture of the Madeleine, standing veiled within its superb surrounding columns, — a literal “pillared shade.” You know it familiarly; and yet I know it a little better now; and the meaning of this and other like things comes to me in ways I had not thought much of, until I stood actually before them.

The reason why they built these churches, and called them by their distinguishing names; the idea that underlies the dedication and harmony of adornment; I begin to trace this, and delight in looking for it; though doubtless, like many other genuine and vital initial thoughts, I shall often find it utterly mixed and lost, as are the ideas of Art themselves, in the decadence

which befell from a pure insight to mere technical rote and jumble.

That Saint Roch was called the Saint of the Rock; that his church has the holy Rock of Calvary for its appropriate shrine; that the Madeleine, church of expiation, should bear upon its front, beneath the high-relief of the Last Judgment, — "To Almighty God, by the invocation of Saint Mary Magdalene," and be filled with pictures of the Penitence, and Conversion, the Washing of the sacred Feet, the Praying in the Wilderness, with angels to comfort her, the Supper at Bethany, and the blessed grace of the Resurrection Announcement to her who had been a sinner, — what are these but great ministries and answers, in things that shall stand, to the need and asking of the world?

Christ was crucified. His saints also have crucified their lives after his word. "Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." "Out of Mary Magdalene the Lord cast seven devils, and received her to dearest discipleship." It seemed to me that these were the things they meant who builded, or else invisibly the Lord Himself built the house, and put his own inscription upon it, through the vain, half-conscious plan of them who labored.

It almost seemed as if the sweet withdrawal of the simple Madeleine behind the greatness of its pillared surrounding, was an expression in the edifice itself of Mary's tender, safe humility, and abiding in the Strength and Refuge that are "round about" the forgiven and redeemed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EVERLASTING GATES.

.
 OUT of Paris, through what was literally "sunny France," and little else, that August day.

A long rail-ride, across flat, unbroken plains, and along river valleys flanked by low hills, golden russet with the sun-ripening — among vineyards and farms that lay open to an unrelieved blaze; a journey very different from the green delight of England, — brought us at last to a more broken country, and through cuttings and tunnels in the Côte d'Or, to Dijon; where we got an uneatable dinner (having blundered upon a wrong hotel), and passed a miserable section of a night, till four in the morning; then we railed away again, comforted only by knowing that we were heading swiftly toward the mighty mountains that began to show to the eastward, and had escaped out of the wearisome horizon that for so many hours of yesterday had spread out flat around us like the rim of a trencher.

As we came forth among the farms that looked green and pleasant in the early morning, and stopped at some little station in the edge of a small town, a cock stood upon a fence and crowed.

"*That* is good American!" exclaimed Emery Ann.

"It is; and it's a real comfort," she repeated, as we all laughed. "Everything speaks it but the people. The dogs bark, and the cocks crow, and the cats yawl, and the babies cry, in real plain American as ever was. The *folks* make the difference, growing up. The things are all right, — just as they are at home; the sun and the grass, and the trees, and the water; it's all the same, only not so much variety. You could n't find your map-questions, to save your life, if you did n't know. There ain't any colors to tell your boundaries by."

Emery Ann is a shrewd woman, and a thinking one ; she has her own fashion of taking up her instincts and turning them to insights. The divine language is one everywhere, and she discerned it. Green is green ; and blue is blue ; and bright is bright ; tones are identical ; trees, fields, hills, clouds,— all talk the dear primeval language that we know ; and the living Word is at the root and heart of all meaning, and Home is behind all lands.

Over the hot plains of France had been an approach to make the mountain gateway more blessedly glorious, as it seemed actually to roll open before us when we reached and passed Pontarlier.

Higher and higher tossed and tumbled the hills, surging into peaks ; greener grew the dark verdure of the pines ; sweeter rested the pure clouds upon great, shadowy shoulders ; at last,— oh, at last ! the heavy barriers parted away from each other across the deep, beautiful gorge of the Travers, and we looked along its parallels of mysterious gloom to the far, strange, sudden vision of white Alps !

A dazzle among soft, gray, nearer shapes ; points and gleams, touches and shines of snowy slopes and tops ; not yet exact,— not born out of the cloudy indefiniteness, quite ; a far-off apprehension, like the first spirit-perception of the other shore from the sea,— the Other Land from this !

Then we lost it again, for a snatch ; it came back, and then was gone for longer ; we rolled on, and the hills rolled around us, making the wondrous revelation of the heights, that tells us what no vastness of globe-surface, unruffled and unheaved, could ever tell. We could not know the earth upon a great level ; but lifted up and shone upon, reared into grand shapes, changing with changing lights,— now a rift, now a pasture,— again the shelter of age-old forests unprofaned ; showing continually some new relation,— uttering endlessly some new syllables of the world-word,— we can see how it is *all there*, and how the heaven itself rests upon it.

“And I if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”

We climbed the slow, long grades into the Juras ; we crossed high viaducts ; we saw beside and below us,— often far below,

hung between us and the sparkle of river or lake, — lovely villages ; we wound round dizzy brinks, and hovered as if in mid heaven, over vivid blue waters. Away, southward, in another mid heaven, gleamed the ice summits, struck by the full noon sun.

It was a threshold of glory ; far off, a world of glory shone and stretched, heaped up and up, beyond and beyond. We were coming to it presently. For thousands of ages it had been there ; we had been but one, and two, score years upon the earth ; yet our life-times looked long to us in which this had waited and we had not seen it.

At last, we slid into a station. We were arrived at Neuchâtel.

ON THE HOUSETOP.

We are busy, a great deal, with Baedeker and the maps. Switzerland is like the diagram puzzle we used to have when I was at school, — to be drawn without taking off the pencil, or passing it twice over the same line. We find it hard to make all the lines and points we want to, without retracing steps too much. We must have Chamouny, and Lucerne, and the Rhigi ; between these, up and down, back and forth, are routes we find it hard to trace in economical order, and in the best time for each. The Wengern Alp and the Jungfrau, — the valley of the

Grindelwald and the Great Scheideck — the Brünig Pass, the Haslithal and the Fürca and the Rhone glacier, — the Gemmi, if we dare it, and the beautiful journey by Kandersteg, — above all, Zermatt and the Matterhorn; and then the Simplon Pass into Italy; can we bring all these in, — and will the time be long enough, — and which are the “must-haves” and the may-do-withouts?

Then, too, our fortnight of staying somewhere and getting a real feeling of belonging, and a home-thought for Switzerland to last after all this touring about shall have kinked itself up again in our memories, and become like the snarled skein we are unraveling one end of now?

We think we should like it best somewhere at the head of Lake Lemán; and that it would be better before than after our mountain wanderings. It should be, indeed, if we are to end with Zermatt and the Simplon.

“Come up and be dead!” cried Margaret and Edith together, the evening of the third day we had been here, as with a hasty knock they rushed eagerly into my room.

“We have found out the top of the house!”

So Emery Ann and I came in from the balcony, and went out into the corridor that in each of the four spacious stories of the hotel runs around the great square skylighted centre, in which, below, a marble-paved saloon green and cheerful with flowers and shrubs in tubs and vases, and with sofas ranged around the sides, forms the delightful entrance hall into which everything opens.

The chambermaid had brought the key, and was waiting.

We went up two flights of stairs, and she opened a little door which disclosed a ladder-like ascent to a trap in the roof. She lifted it, and we passed through.

“If we could n’t have any more, should n’t we think this was enough?” exclaimed Edith, as we stepped out to the railed edge of the great flat housetop and looked wonderingly forth.

The sun had just gone down. The sky was all rosy and blue, with those soft, golden-tawny clouds that turn red afterward, and then slowly purple and gray. Behind us rose the hill, and

the town that stretches up its side; its white buildings,—its old castle,—its twelfth-century temple on the heights,—all clear against the green and the blue, and bathed in tender radiance.

Down in the lake, deep, vivid reflections, and opal tints rippling richly under the heaven so full of color. The wide-away ranges of the Bernese Alps heaped in the south and east beyond the water,—their shadowy lines and crowns like blue and violet mists; and the white peaks palely touched with pink; Mont Blanc revealing himself in a grand, far-off purity which the warm light faintly mantled and made more living-beautiful.

"Mamma must come," said Margaret; and went down to fetch her.

We sat on the low parapet bench, and let the glory rain around us, and shift, and deepen, and pour itself away, till the gray dropped, and the stillness itself fell like a curtain, and all things bowed themselves and waited. Then a great globe of softened fire rolled up behind the rim of eastern hills and spilled its splendor into sky and lake and against mountain borders; and in the moonlight there was a new wonder and a new world.

Little boats put forth and came in upon the water far below, and no sound disturbed us. The bustle of street and court-yard did not reach us here; nothing reminded us that we were on the roof of a busy, crowded hotel, where people and luggage were coming and going. We were out of it all. We saw no house below us. We were on a great air-raft, lying afloat in the midst between clouds and water. We were "dead" and blessed.

"Let him that is on the housetop not come down."

But the way farther lay down, through the house. And their way must have lain so also. Only, having fetched things from the hills and from the heavens, one never need come down utterly to the mere fetching of the things below, and the being burdened with them. Was not that the saying,—said to them who on the Jerusalem housetops, escaping from the under-toil to the glory of the firmament and the circling crests of Judah and Benjamin and of far-off Moab and the Wilderness, had been learning all their lives a great meaning that was ready for the word?

Yesterday, Mrs. Regis came to me and said, — "There was something in my mind that I had half an intention of mentioning to you in Paris. I wonder if I might ask a real favor of you, — if I should decide to want it, and I think I shall."

"Of course you may, without hesitation. I only hope it may be something possible to me."

"What if I were to leave Margaret with you, — just making the fourth, you know, — the nice carriage number, — for the trip to Chamounix; and I were to go to Heidelberg meantime? I have a letter from some friends who have been spending the summer there thus far; and they urge me to come. I have been to Chamounix, and I have a great desire to do this, for which there will be no other opportunity. I could come back and meet you again anywhere between Martigny and Lausanne, if you find a place to stay at; or at Interlachen, if you keep on there. I think we must decide against the Gemmi; it is too hazardous, and we never should hold out to do *all* those passes. In that case we should come round by rail again to Interlachen, and so by Grindelwald and the Brünig to Lucerne."

"And then by Altorf and Andermatt to the Fürca and the Rhone?"

"Yes; and to Zermatt last, if strength and weather hold. What do you think? About Chamounix and Margaret, I mean? Of course we shall all be together afterward, to decide the journey as it comes along."

"It would be nothing but pleasure to have Margaret with us," I said; "if you feel that this plan is best in every other way."

It was nothing that I could help, if it were not the best; of course they would decide; but something hindered me from grasping as eagerly at this possession of Margaret to ourselves as I might have done if I could have seen — or foreseen — everything that might depend.

It seems absurd to be jealous of possibilities for Margaret, because her step-mother will very likely meet General Rushleigh in Germany. Especially now that I think I know Mrs. Regis better, and that I do not believe she would use any positive manoeuvre. That mean notion of not wanting her step-daughter to marry where she could not decently refuse consent, for the

sake of the money question involved, is utterly put aside, if, indeed one could ever really have had it. The hindrance between Margaret and her father's widow is far more delicate and remote.

It is the hinge of interest between them that shuts the door. Mrs. Regis, within, world-wise, and comfortable, cannot understand why that which opens so readily from her, if she choose to give it the touch, may not be as easily drawn back from the opposite side; not feeling how it flies in Margaret's face. Margaret, who would dash any barrier back against herself if it were to admit from an outer waiting one who needed her own comfort and shelter, will not do it that she may be received into the like. She stands in her own hard circumstance, true as light, but proud also — as people say — as the very son of the morning.

Indeed, it is a question whether, were she of another temperament, — if her simpleness were yielding and acquiescent instead of high and sensitive and conscious, — whether her step-mother would have been able to understand it for what it was, and not rather come to credit her, — or suspect her, — as acting from at least a wise self-seeking; a reasonable common sense, of which was the "battered side" of life for her. For Mrs. Regis's own practical adroitness might easily turn upon her in the quality of suspicion, if credited to another; since one can always trust one's self in the handling of a dangerous thing, sooner than see with confidence another using it.

It may be that through their very oppositions and incomprehensions, the two will come at last — "at long and at last," may be — quite beyond this present phase of mutual experience, and though it should go quite wrong with them to our minds — into that relation for which they have been set together, of a purer recognition and a more blessed help than any outside fitting or smoothness.

But now, — one does think of the immediate possibilities. For Mrs. Regis is a woman at the climax of her womanhood. She is forty-three years old, and her perfect prime has not begun to wane. Between thirty and fifty, woman-life is fullest, intensest, in its fulfillment and gracious radiation, or in its reali-

zation of a nature uncrowned, — of needs unmet. If a vision come at that age of something that might have been, but never was, it reveals itself across all barriers and discrepancies ; and the struggle, if a struggle follow, is in proportion. It is as when "a giant dies ;" and the little insects cannot feel a " pang as great."

With all her ripe knowledge and her full power, she discerns in herself her youth again, and what it should have given against this strong, unsatisfied time. She is back in the years when she missed it ; she takes up an inward experience of which she has forfeited the sign. The absurd marriages which women make in middle or advancing years are not so absurd perhaps, after all, in the essence of things ; only they would better have waited for the life that shall be all built up on the inward truth and relation, and the stones of whose houses may be the very ones that were blindly rejected or falsely precluded in the old, hasty, ignorant building.

I doubt if Mrs. Regis admits to herself what she most wants to go to Heidelberg for. I doubt if she has been conscious that she would not look with complacency, — or why she would not, — upon a possibility between Margaret and General Rushleigh. And of course there is no way or word given to me now, by which I could show her what perhaps I have no right to be sure I see myself. It must go on, and happen as it will. General Rushleigh is nine years younger than this still splendid, fascinating woman, who may, as her sudden Indian summer shines upon her, soften and sweeten into something so much more. The brief youth that comes in such a manner, — like the late love, — has a glow that the first youth never knew.

There are perhaps fifteen years the other way, between the other two. But we feel it different when a man's heart grows young, — or has been kept young with a grand purity, — for a love that comes a little late ; and a girl's life blooms and ripens to its offered fervor.

There is one thing : unless he should know better about that entanglement of Margaret's, Paul Rushleigh would not take one step toward her, or toward the breaking down of any pledge she might be under.

And separately, — and at her best, — and with that safe charm of slightly elder friendship, and association with what has been a mingled pleasantness of companionship, — Mrs. Regis has the move, and makes her play.

Well! God knows; and He will see to it. Meanwhile, Patience Strong! do not meddle unless you are somehow called. For the very sake that if the word or sign does come, you may transmit it electric with its own authority.

CHAPTER XX.

STEPPING IN.

.
WE came down from Neuchâtel to Vevay, thinking to go right on down the lake to Geneva and Chamounix. But it became so apparent that not only our two confessedly delicate ones, Edith and Emery Ann, but I myself, had done traveling enough of late, and needed toning up by a little further passive reception of the mountain catholicon, before attempting the great toil and joy of our first real mountain work, that we wrote thence to Mrs. Regis that we should defer our tour, and perhaps hunt up our Swiss Eden first, and make trial of it for a week or so. She had told us not to mind a week more or less; she could be with us at twenty-four hours' notice after she should return to Basle; and if anything happened to detain us we were not to worry. So we resolved to be detained at once; and a letter from Mrs. Regis found us here a few days afterward, quite approving our decision, and indifferent as to possibly losing the stay in this region, as she should be making hers in Baden.

We stopped one night at the "Three Crowns" in Vevay, whose garden terrace lies right along the lake, upon which, seated by the parapet, or wandering up and down the shaded alleys, we passed a delicious evening. But we were impatient of hotels, and longed for the real mountains; so we took a carriage the next morning, and were driven along the lake side, through Clarens and Montreux, stopping at several "pensions," and looking at rooms, but finding nothing that quite satisfied our eagerness for the very most of wildness and of comfort combined, until we climbed up here, over our first mountain zigzag.

The towns upon the lake are lovely, their gardens and balconies running out and overhanging the blue water, — the marvelous blue you have heard of, but cannot fancy until you look

into its jewel-depth, — and lying under the vast sheltering heights that shut in heaven itself to another sapphire lake-circumference above ; but the streets are close and the heights entice you ; the spell of Switzerland, which is “Excelsior !” is upon you, and you go up — at least we did, — restless until you find an eyrie among the altitudes and of them.

You climb up between sloping vineyards, walled on either side. You are disappointed — a little — in the vineyards themselves, though you knew better than to be. Of course they are for fruit, and the foliage is trimmed down. There are no green, tossing sprays, no riotous, wandering branches ; no graceful, arbor-like overclaspings. They look more like bean-gardens ; the vines planted and trained by stiff, short poles, in stiff, regular rows. I do not think they are so pretty as a bean-garden ; and *hops* are ever so much more lovely. But with a basket of their clear, rich, wine-distended amber fruit before me, — filled fresh every morning and eaten from at every odd minute when I have nothing else to do — I have not a word for their mission and results, but of delight.

Back and forth, making sharp turns, the road *angles* itself up the precipitous hillside. We turned dizzy and frightened, often, as we looked down, seeing the town diminish into a group of toy houses, and the lake drop itself deeper in its green setting, and the little boats and steamers look like water-skippers in a summer pool.

Then we passed into deep woods and wound right and left among their recesses, the great pillared trunks thronging about us, and a dense shade overhead ; still up and up, — then out on some dizzy edge or platform suddenly, that showed the vineyards and streets and lake and skimming boats fallen into yet profounder distance ; the old round towers of Chillon with their coned roofs told where the fortress of the cruel Middle Age sat there by the waters ; the mountains over opposite rose and rose, in their might, against our petty climbing, and filled as much of the sky as ever. We said to each other, “Is there any end ? And shall we ever dare to come down again ?”

All at once, — everything comes all at once among these mountains — we wound round through a bit of thick woods, and

out on to an open plateau, and found ourselves at the garden front of a large, comfortable hotel-pension, the "Maison Victoria." And it is here — halfway up the great height — set with our backs to the perpendicular of the wooded steep, and our faces toward the blue lake far below and to the majesty of the dark cliffs and peaks that shadow it from beyond, that we found rooms, and took possession at once for a week at least; sending back to Vevay for our trunks and to pay the bill, and to restore the big key of our room which Emery Ann had brought away in her pocket; and here we are living the life of the lifted-up, in a sphere that hangs midway between earth and heaven.

The garden, laid out in parterres of bright flowers, and bounded at the front by a shaded walk; and a low wall runs from the house to the brink of the precipice which falls sheer from the stones you lean upon, almost — as it seems looking downward — to the very water.

Away down to the left, you see the brown towers and black cones of Chillon; grimly tame, a place for the curious to wander through, and stand safe in its swept-out dungeons and beside its horrible *oubliette*, and in the very footpaths worn around its chaining-pillars by the feet of miserable, doomed men. But we shall see it when we go down; and then I can tell you, perhaps, something of what it seems like.

From the broad esplanade-balcony which runs along before the drawing-rooms, — or from the windows of the rooms above, two of which we are so fortunate as to occupy, — we look away into the hearts of the mountain shapes and shadows; we see them form and shine under the coming of the morning light, and retreat and darken and cover themselves with the night. We see what I never saw before, or knew what it was if I did see it, — the mountains *go to sleep*. For this is just what they do, as the evening hushes down, and the stars come out in the stillness. The vast forms that reared up so mightily, as with a majestic visible motion, in the quickening of the morning and the clear, splendid glow of noon, stretch and lower themselves now to repose. The dim outline takes a new expression. The giants are recumbent, one after another, along the great sentinel line. The stars sprinkle down their rain upon these

awful foreheads and breasts as the constellations drop one by one westwardly; the golden drops lie glittering upon the crested ridges before they vanish. The milky way streams over the zenith, and pours itself, like a river of light, upon them.

We have sat before the shadowed glory till it seemed as if we had no right to sit and watch it any longer; for it was like finding ourselves hidden behind royal curtains, shut in to the privacy of kings.

Down in the southeast, up the lake and river valley, and closing across its farther stretch, stands the Dent du Midi; the great northern summit, or group of summits, bright with snow, that gives itself in glimpses never twice alike; an endless revelation. And yet it is only one outstanding cluster that tells us of uncounted and ineffable wonders in its world beyond; the world of peaks and snows and glaciers that lies behind this near cordon of lesser citadel hills and the water-chain at their feet; the inner keeps of awfulness and might; the great Alp-world of Italy and Savoy.

We sit here, eating grapes, and re-arranging trunks, and mourning over a little loss, — a great loss of ever so many little indispensable things, — while those wonders are awaiting us. Well, — or ill! that is the human way.

Emery Ann found it out; and it was Emery Ann who did it. It was she who left our "bag at Dover." For it has grown already into a catchword. We shall never need or miss anything again in all the rest of our pilgrimage, that we shall not say or imagine, if possible, that it was "in the bag we left at Dover."

I wanted a fresh supply of pins for my traveling basket-cushion; Edith was out of hair-pins; — she is always out; she never knows the comfort of a regular old set every one of which has its place and its bend; she puts in new, shining, slippery ones by the dozen, without the least regard to the laws of mechanics, and drops them out of her smooth, soft, heavy braids like rain, — "pitchfork-rain, I suppose," she said, when I told her that; there was a place to be sewed in a trunk cover; and the pins and the hair-pins and the sail-needles and fine twine,

were in that biggest, most ingeniously compartmented, gray-linen sea-pocket, which we had devoted to all these etcetera, that we might always know where to lay hand upon them.

Emery Ann and I searched through and through our luggage ; we laid out piles on piles, recklessly, around us on the floor ; we reached the bottom of every trunk in turn ; the gray pocket was nowhere.

"When did we go to it last, and what for?" It was when we were making the burlaps covers at Dover ; Emery Ann remembered it quite well. The last thing of all was the sewing down of Edith's cover with that strong twine. And then we recollected the fright and bustle we had because Mrs. Regis missed suddenly a diamond from one of her rings ; her engagement ring ; a splendid solitaire. And a splendid solitaire is such a dreadfully wee thing, after all, to look for, when it is out of its setting !

We were to leave the next morning ; it must be found at once, if findable. We were all down on hands and knees ; we groped and peered under unmovables and pulled about everything that could be moved ; Mrs. Regis herself unpacked the trunk she had just closed, and shook every article ; we sent for the chambermaid and questioned her about the toilet-bucket ; at last, with a great shout of delight, Margaret espied it close by the footknob of the heavy bureau. But it had upset all our minds. And now Emery Ann could not *recollect* recollecting anything again about the great gray bag. She "presumed" she had forgotten it. "And there was the little double-up tack-hammer in it !" she sighed woefully.

"And the dear little Russia-leather, screw-together candle-sticks !" said Edith.

"And all those pencils — a whole drawing-case full — of Faber's F's, pointed, ready to use !" said I.

"And penknife, — and box of pens, — and tapes, — and corkscrews, — and my little measuring ribbon ! and a bag of sewing-silks, — and the little patent clotheshooks, — and extra tooth-brushes, — and no end of pins and hair-pins, — and soap, — and boot-buttons, — and rubber corks !" We enumerated in turn and all together as the details of our misfortune came back upon our minds.

"We shall *never* know all that there was in that bag!" said I.

"No," said Emery Ann, solemnly. "It's as if we'd lost a relation that we had n't thought half enough of. We shall keep finding out the good of it now it's gone."

And so we do. But I think the most of my little measuring ribbon. You gave it to me, Rose, ever so long ago, for a birthday present.

. . . . Margaret had letters to-day, from Saratoga. Edith, too, had one from a school friend who was making her first grown-up summer journey, and who had just arrived also at the Springs.

Katie wrote, — "I shall *never* forget that night when we got to Congress Hall! We were all tired out I suppose; but we had no idea of stopping to think about it, for there was a hop in the great ball-room, and she and I were bound to go. We had come all the way from St. John's, — back from Montreal, you know; down Lake Champlain, — or up, which is it? to Whitehall; and then across country in that dusty, crowded train! But we had tea, and we got out our dresses. Sue's was tea-rose silk with a black lace basque, and mine was white, with blue watered ribbon-stripes, and exquisite little trailing white roses for my hair and corsage! We thought *each other* looked bewitching when we were done.

"We had our tea in our room, and then went to mamma's room and waited. We thought papa never would be ready. But at last we went up the grand stairs, — past such *walls* of mirrors, — I never saw myself *away off* before, in a blazing light, walking up toward myself like some other girl, and then across, far enough to see how she moved and how her skirts trailed, and how much nicer she looked than I believed I did — which is what you always think, you know, when you see another girl come in at a party, — and — where was I? oh, up-stairs, and into the great ball-room.

"And the band was *bursting* all through the house with beautiful music; and inside was a wall of lookers-on, six rows deep, and inside that — was fairy-land and the fairies!

"Well, we were n't *anybodies*, in our tea-rose and blue, after

all! Such girls! where do they come from, and where do they keep, daytimes? I can't tell you about it, Edie; I danced, and I drank in beauty and delight.

"One girl — she was the belle, everybody said — I could not take my eyes off from. She is Nellie FitzEustace, a great New Orleans man's daughter; and she has just — well, just long enough to be out of mourning — inherited a fortune of her own from her grandfather; half a million, they say. And she's just as sweet as if she were six years old; and she *is n't* but sixteen. Her hair dresses itself, and she's all the time tossing it out of the way and undoing it, — no, making it do itself prettier and prettier. And her eyes are as blue as two stars, — oh, stars *ain't* blue; but they shine *out* of it, you know! and she dances like a daisy — you know what I mean — and she does *n't* care two pins, either, only for the minute. They say she flings all her elegant things down anyway when she gets to her room, and takes a book, and gets into bed, and has the gas turned up high, and reads. She does that half the time, in her little white wrappers, when her father thinks she is dressing for a ball — he's awfully proud of her! and when he comes to the door, she says, 'O papa, I forgot! Must I go?' She likes stories and poetry so much better than the partners and the dancing.

"Colonel FitzEustace drives magnificent horses, and Nellie has a pair of ponies. I saw them go off to the lake yesterday with a lot of friends. I *do* hope I shall come to know her!

"I'll tell you who else is here; the Boston Mackenzies; Flora and Harry. Harry is splendid. He danced last night with Nellie FitzEustace. I was just in love with both of them, — there!"

It is great nonsense, certainly, for old Patience Strong to sit and copy; but it is very sweet nonsense, is *n't* it? And you know old Patience is always more than half-bewitched with young ecstasy.

I wondered what Margaret's letters said to her; and if there was anything in them about Nellie FitzEustace.

Is *n't* it good that, even if you do get hold of two ends of a string, by accident, you can't always pull them? I should not dare, if I could; but I think my fingers might twitch, maybe, in spite of me.

CHAPTER XXI.

YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.

.
. . . . We came down from Glion two days after I wrote that last page. We found there was not any summer left to be idle in. We woke up suddenly and realized that September — and perhaps changing weather — was close upon us. We must make haste, or we should lose the mountains in the autumn fogs and rains.

Coming down the zigzag was beautiful. We forgot to be afraid. The precipices and pitches did not seem so high and dreadful as they did before we had got used to living in the heights.

Down into Montreux, and out along the Lake-road a little way, to Chillon. We went to the old castle the last thing, you see.

Over the bridge, — on each side of which, now, are little stands and booths where people sell “souvenirs,” — I bought an “etui” of carved wood for you, Rose, — over the bridge, under the old portullis entrance, into the unevenly-paved court-yard, sloping up to different doorways in the grim walls that shut in its irregular sides, — we passed into the lower parts of the building, and were led into various guard-rooms, under offices, and prisoners’ rooms; the very *spaces* seemed heavy with their massive, clumsy inclosures of huge stones and timbers; we *felt* that the whole castle was above us.

We saw places and contrivances for torture; we looked down the horrible *oubliette*, that opened from the floor of one of the rooms, like a bottomless pit. We climbed up the uncouth stairway; we came through the Duke’s chamber, — a dark, dreadful hole enough it looks now, — not much better than his pris-

oners'; and saw a heavy, worm-eaten timber set up against the wall, which they told us was a part of his bedstead; the bedstead of the famous Duke, Charles; and round through a little, three-cornered, lobby-like passage, we entered that of the Duchess; far in from light and air, bare of finish, and empty of all that ever made it habitable; nothing but solid black beams and stone walls; covered, doubtless, with hangings once, and garished with rude Middle Age splendor; but a place that it was hard to imagine any duchess ever entered.

The "Knights' Hall" was close by; a long room, running from the same passage that opened into the ducal apartments and occupying the distance between two corner towers, I think. Here, a presence met us,—a reality. One could fancy the boisterous life that had filled it. The banner-staves were there, and the battle-axes, and the long pikes, marked with the cross of Savoy,—ranged and hung against the inner wall. In the outer side, fronting the lake, were deep windows with stone seats. I sat down in one, and looked out through the narrow opening into the deep, vivid-blue water that washed the wall below, and imagined easily the ring of armor behind me, and the movement and voices of men gathered here in some hour of relaxation from their warlike duty. I could even forget that I was I, Patience Strong, a nineteenth century woman from Massachusetts: and could think of two warrior friends, mail-clad, with just their visors up to show their human faces, with human kindness in them for each other, sitting here together for some brief minutes in the stone embrasure, looking out on the fair waters, and talking of adventure or plan in which they were companions. There was just room for two. One cannot help thinking of some possible two, where there is just space for them and no more.

Edith called me to go down. The guide was leading our party away again, to visit the dungeons. If I had seen them first, I do not believe I could have had even that little vision of gentle intercourse and human fellowship in the Knights' Hall.

How could the Duchess sleep in her strong, stone-walled, arras-hung bower above those miseries and moans?

Yet Chillon is only a *small* world.

The moans and the dungeons are the lowest stratum, always. And we do all eat, and drink, and sleep, and rise up to play.

Underneath everything, based on the rock, walled in with heaviest, rudest stonework, is the range of dungeons.

They open one within another. A guard-room first, through which alone you come to the fest. Another room, or cellar, next, in which is the great, black beam for executions. Another, beyond, in which a natural slope of stone has been roughly shaped into a sort of bed or couch, which fills one half the space. On this the condemned lay, the last night he had to live. I saw Margaret stand before it a moment when the others had passed on, and put her foot in one of the lowermost hollows which are like steps in the rock, as if she would climb to the dreadful resting-place. But she stopped and only reached her hand to the side of it, and touched it with a pitiful reverence, as if she touched a bier; and turning back again, she came to me with her eyes filled with tears.

Poor souls that suffered there so long ago! I wonder if it is anything to them now that a young girl from the far-side of the world stood there this summer day with tears for them in her pure, tender eyes!

Perhaps: it may have been, even then, since then and now are not really separate, in spirit-things. They must have felt tears and pity near them; God's pity, — of which hers is part.

In the outer wall, opposite the bed, opens close to the floor the spout-like passage through which the bodies were slidden into the lake.

From this dungeon, reaching out a rectangular length like the shape of the Knights' Hall, above, is the one in which the eight pillars, supports of the upper structure, run through the midst, from whose great chain-staples the fetters hung that bound the prisoners each to his own pitiless post.

We saw the carven names; we stood in the worn hollows that their feet had pressed; we touched Bonnivard's pillar, where his head must have leaned in his long despair.

I thought of it again; — the living Pity; which was there then as now; which knows all the moments, while men know but one; — of the Presence in which those moments joined

themselves, and do join; — of the Books that shall be opened, when we shall wonder that any page of them has seemed to any like the end, or long in turning, when the whole was there.

“Can anything ever seem to bind hopelessly, since we have seen those?” I said to Margaret, beside me.

Afterward we sailed down the beautiful, radiant Lake, in a swift, gay little steamer. Another steamer, coming up, passed us, with happy faces crowding along its sides. I caught the name, in golden letters, on its bows. It was “Bonnivard.”

We had come out from the long Yesterday, into the sure To-day.

We have bought little watches here, in Geneva. Margaret has one for her small namesake niece, Margaret Vanderhuysen, with the monogram on the tiny back in blue enamel. I have bought one for little “Mary Strong,” motherdie’s name-child; and the whole name is engraved upon it in a minute circle of pearls.

We have had some photographs taken. I send you one of myself; it is thinner, I think, than ever. But you know I am always thin at the top of all those photographer’s stairs. I am well; only so tired with travel! My writing to you is a defense; I make it my plea for “swearing off” from much else that I should have to do.

We were up in the photograph rooms when the Duke of Brunswick’s funeral passed by; that queer old man, uncle to Victoria of England, who has just died here, and left all his money to the city. In consequence, the day of his burial was solemn holiday.

We climbed out on the roof-front, — a dizzy ledge, just wide enough for a chair, — and looked down, five or six stories’ depth into the avenue below, where the cortège, small enough for a royal duke, was moving along. In America, a duke of *ours*, who had “benefacted” a city, or the community, would have been followed, — unless he forbade it beforehand, — by a mile or two of civic officers, professions, trades, public schools, and institutions, and trailed over as long a line of march as could be doubled and twisted through the principal streets, — or even up

and down the land through principal cities. But a few couples of bare-headed gentlemen following the bier, a few carriages, and a short foot procession in the rear of these, with no marks or signs about anybody, that we could discern, passed by here in five minutes, and that was all.

We were helped in again, with cold shivers running over us, as we stood and turned on our perilous perch, and wondering what we had done it for.

.
 We have been to the Musée Rath. We have seen there, — besides ever so many other paintings, modern and antique, and sculptures and fragments innumerable, which were wonderful enough to look at at the time, and by the catalogue, but which fix themselves to nothing in my thought or sympathy, and which I *leave there*, — two pictures which you must look at with me; because while I stood before them, everything else vanished, and when I came away they came with me, and are among the things that belong to me henceforth.

They were two small pictures, painted by native Swiss artists not supreme in talent, or widely famous. I found them — and they found me — in a quiet corner of the long room; the face that looked out of the first, from among indistinct surroundings, — with its parted hair, its broad, patient forehead, its deep, suffering, loving eyes, its sad, sweet lips, — was like the face of our Lord, as it has been best imagined. Not in mere outline; there was no imitation; but the *story* was there, out of which the likeness inevitably grew. I have seen it in one or two living faces. It is the story of them who “die to make men free.” Not victims of cross or sword, necessarily; they might be, if the path led that way; but the daily givers of their lives. It was a continual giving, — an hourly enduring.

I did not need to glance from the face to the lesser details of the picture, — which I really hardly dwelt upon to remember, — to know that the man was a prisoner. A “prisoner of hope” to others, though it might be of his own despair.

I turned to the catalogue and read, — as if my intuition printed itself at the moment, — “Boninivard.”

I said I did not dwell upon the details of his surrounding;

this was why. I had just been in the real surrounding ; I was instantly again in that subterranean dungeon, standing on its indented, rocky floor ; the pillar and chain before me, — the one gleam of light striking in through the narrow opening in the thick wall, and falling upon that face ! I was with him, bodily, in his prison, — in whose presence, across the three hundred years, I had felt myself that other morning in Chillon. I could have stretched out my hands to him in pity, love, and reverence.

“ Margaret ! ” I called softly ; and as she came beside me, I took her hand in mine. “ There ! ”

She saw, and caught her breath. “ Chillon ! Bonnivard ! ” she said ; and leaned toward the picture as she had leaned toward that stony pillow where the heads of the condemned had rested.

I shall never recall that moment without a feeling as if I had once really visited him in his captivity.

“ There is another,” she said presently. “ There is a ‘ Release.’ We found it close by.”

The Genevese patriots are entering the dungeons of the stormed and forced stronghold.

The face in this picture is not so striking as that in the other ; or I was too possessed with the first. I carried that into the second scene, as I had carried it back to the actual prison. I brought but one face—from the two—away with me. The two together made us eye-witnesses of the man and his grand moments. As we had been eye-witnesses of that crowning in Notre Dame. Only, how far holier a crowning was this !

I shall never drag you through long galleries, Rose ; I do not think I shall drag myself much ; but wherever in Europe, — and I doubt if there be many wheres, — I find an instant and a fact, I shall long to make you enter in to it with me. I doubt, moreover, if I find these facts and instants in the — technically — greatest works. When men were paid for an altar-piece, or for the fresco of so many square yards of wall, or for the doing of a subject that had been done to literal — because spiritual — death already, I do not think the Holy Ghost came down, always, into their souls and fingers. And I only care for things

that have been so baptized that a baptism yet flows from them. I know very well that it may be there when I cannot receive it, not being worthy. Then I will say nothing, — there is nothing for me to say, — though it be the thing that all the rest of the world declares divine.

Margaret and I had an odd little talk that grew from the seeing of this picture.

"Why is it," she asked me, "that the parting of a man's hair upon his forehead signifies such opposite things in opposite people? It gives the noblest expression, — and it gives the meanest. So that the very persons who find it beautiful in sacred pictures, and recognize the head of Christ by that grand, meek look, laugh at a modern young man who 'parts his hair in the middle?'"

"You have just put it into the joining of those two words, — that 'grand-meek look.' It is the lowliness of grandeur, — the royal meekness of the head that is bared and bent for anointing and for crowning. Nothing can wear that gentleness that is not great. When a silly fellow puts it on, it is a caricature. Or rather it tells too small and positive a truth. Besides," I said, "there is the signification of the hair itself, — the thing it stands for."

"What do you mean, Miss Patience?"

"I mean the living fibres. What reaches out of our life, and makes toward anything. For that is what 'affection' is. I thought it out, dear, over a lock of mother's hair. It is all I have of her — bodily — now. And I used to wonder why hair lasted, when everything else that belonged to the mortal perished away. I was sure there must be a meaning in it. And I believe it has come to me, explaining many things. Hair is 'electric' (and that is another word, if we could stop over it, — full of a life that *elects*); it is a growth out of very vitality. It is an outstreaming and conducting of a force of being. Fine, — and multitudinous, — millions of little uncountable, inseparable threads; and all together a glory, and a beauty, and an expression of the person, more than almost anything. And made so that it lasts always! Was n't that a blessed revelation,

when God finished man with an unperishable thing? When He made something that we could hold back from decay, and keep for our loving comfort when all other touch and sight has to be given up?"

There were tears in Margaret's eyes, as she looked at me and listened.

"I have a lock of mother's hair, too," she said. "I thank you so much for telling me. I think after this it will seem like her own living touch when I take it in my hand."

"I think it was given to seem so," I said.

"But there is more," said Margaret, after a minute. "I like all your meanings, Miss Patience. Please tell me the rest. We did not begin with that sign."

"No; we began with the wearing. Hair,—think of it as affections, mind,—parted from the crown, and flowing softly down, seems like effluence from the highest; a meek, gentle giving of what is holy-royal, divine. A small, mean man,—or even a man whom life has in no way crowned,—hardly has any business to wear it so. If he does, it changes to a sign of that which, descending from *his* highest, must descend to very petty things. I think that is the feeling it gives us, though perhaps it seems fanciful put into words. Strong, impetuous persons have much hair. Esau was a hairy man; the politic, small, calculating Jacob was smooth. Selfish, earthly affections, left loose and wandering and unchecked in their growth, are like Absalom's hair; getting entangled in material things and betraying to death. Samson's hair, grown long, and strong, and generous, was his power; cut short by a light woman who seduced him to his own pleasures, it left him helpless to be bound. Hair, tossed, confused, disheveled, is a sign of recklessness, wildness, grief; all the feelings astray or in commotion. A woman binds her hair about her head; it is seemly, feminine restraint. Men have cut off their hair, to express austerity, moderation, control; the Puritans were Roundheads; the rollicking Cavaliers wore floating curls. It is impossible to help expressing character in the lines and arrangements of the hair. The fashions of the hair show the temper of the time. Hair grows white as we grow old; it is

purified from earthiness as we grow toward the time of being like Him who was seen in the vision with 'hair like wool.' Mary wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair; she turned her best love into lowliest service. *We* 'cannot make one hair white or black;' it is 'God that worketh in us to will and to do.' Beautiful, true affections come from Him only. And what He has given, He does not destroy. 'The hairs of our heads are all numbered.' So we came back to personal heart-likes again, and the promise for them by the sign of the indestructible. 'Your hearts shall live forever.'"

I stopped there. I had run on longer than I meant; it was quite a lecture. But Margaret cared for it. She said, —

"I like it, — all, Miss Patience. I should like to find all the places in the Bible where hair is spoken of. Why, it is a new way to find out the Bible, — by such meanings, — isn't it?"

"I think it is *the* way. When I hear people say, of things in the Scriptures, — 'Oh, that is *figurative*,' — as if that disposed of it altogether and turned it into nothing, — I think, 'Oh how you let the keys fall from your hands!' The beauty — and the *necessity* — of the Bible is that it *is* in figures; figures of story and figures of speech; the things that in the beginning had live, direct meaning, because language was the gathering of signs together that God Himself had made, — in men's histories, and in the world they live their histories in, — and had set them over against each other that they might be antiphonies and interpretations to each other forever. 'Figures do not lie,' is a proverb as true of things as it is of numbers."

A little while before, we had been tracing out our coming journey upon a map of Savoy. The book lay in Margaret's lap, as she had left it lying when our talk began, — out of some little thing I asked her if she remembered in those pictures at the Musée.

She took it up as I stopped speaking, and her eye fell again upon the delineations of the mountain ridges, the valley lines, the white spaces where were the snow summits.

"What figures of things we ought to see here!" she said, touching her finger to the leaf.

"Yes. Switzerland is an awful, beautiful writing. A show-

ing in great, tremendous forms. We ought to go in among them as into presences of the inner world."

"Shall we?" asked Margaret, slowly.

I did not dare to answer her.

There are two goings; the going of the body with its cares, and pleasures, and details; and the going of the soul, led secretly in the hand of God.

When I write next, I shall have seen Mont Blanc.

CHAPTER XXII.

BEFORE MONT BLANC.

.
. . . . THE finest diligence and diligence-route in Switzerland, is from Geneva to Chamounix.

It was more like the ride from London to Tunbridge, as to conveyance and pure traveling pleasure, than anything I expected to have again.

We had glorious weather, and outside seats. We occupied the cushioned bench next behind the driver's seat; overhead was a cover, open at the sides.

We passed through pleasant suburbs, and out into green valley-lands, among farms and through country villages. Great mountains rimmed the horizon, but it was a good while before we came really among their scenery. Toward noon they began to shut around us, as we penetrated the deeper valley of the Arve. For a long way, then, we had only river and mountains; the road skirting along the stream, and heading toward apparently impenetrable barriers of cliff, that stretched and towered in the south, while at our left rose high, precipitous slopes from which shining cascades were falling like white threads, disappearing to glance out again lower and lower, till their pleasant runlets crossed our pathway and found the river.

The beautiful fall of Arpenaz, a glory of bursting foam, held our eyes in a lingering backward watch which would not be satisfied, though the delightful thing had kept in our forward sight so long.

These white, scattered waters, — *exploded* into loveliness from their first leap off the sudden edge, where there is no more pathway, until the myriad silver-flashing particles gather

themselves from scores of wild, bewildered trickles into one current and channel again, to break farther down over another brink, and shiver into a new splendor! Over and over again they form and dash asunder and reform, as they hurry down the jagged mountain-side, itself torn first into savage rifts that rend again so savagely.

“Over and over again!” repeated itself in my thoughts in a kind of mechanical way. Over and over; spilled and gathered up! How much is done over and over, for us and in us!

There was a man sent, — sent ignorantly, reluctantly, — to wash, seven times; and he came at last, made clean in his flesh, like a little child. Who knows what any repetition does? For this water, even, coming down, in its whitening plunges, through these reiterated shocks?

The Patience that abides, knows what it does for us, while the repeatings go on. Sinning, and sorrowing; wandering and returning; scattering in atoms and gathering up; washing, and wayfaring, and washing again!

Over and over again,
 Seek me, lest I should lose Thee!
 Over and over again
 Call me, — make me to choose Thee!
 Over and over again
 Wash me, from sin after sin;
 Sevenfold baptism in Jordan
 Give me, that I may be clean!

It is the “seventy times seven” that we dare to pray for, because we are commanded to render it also.

The valley widened out. We began to see, in the rolling aside of the near mountains, as by a grand scene-shifting, the farther, mightier domes and shafts of the masses and needles of the Mont Blanc range, and at last — but I will not tell you of the first flashes of its glory; we came face to face with it at Sallanches.

The diligence stopped at the village inn, just before we came to the bridge which spans the Arve, and so lies straight across the valley line.

Down, — was it down, or up, or away? Off there, at the left, down the wide, beautiful gorge, up into the whole heaven that the

valley slopes framed in, away in a distance measured by point after point in the vista, but close in a wonderful nearness by its mighty assumption to itself of all presence and splendor that were abroad in the visible circle of the heavens and the earth,—in the outpouring of the day, in the spaces that the parted heights made, standing right and left before majesty; in the rush and shine of the river, speeding like a swift, brilliant messenger before the king, sent forth from the awful privacies of his ice-chambers, — Mont Blanc showed itself in its vast white glory to our sight!

The noon sun, through the clear, deep blue, flooded down light upon it. The air, pure from its snows, was like a life and cleanness born and diffused from its being; the movement of trees and waterfalls, and floating clouds less white than that primal whiteness, seemed to wait upon its central stillness, where there was nothing that could stir except the viewless avalanches, and the slow, invisible march of the ice-rivers.

It was there; all else stood in a mere attendance. The little horizons that we had known before, with no Mont Blanc in them, seemed suddenly, as we recollected them, to have no purpose or revelation in comparison.

We moved on, crossing the river. We wound away, along the heights, and through the closing forests, up the left bank of the river. In an hour or so, we came into a deep, green side-gorge of the hills, to which the road turned off. Its wildness and seclusion, and yet this fine highway leading us far into its fastness,—its thronging forest, its sounding waters,—at last, its great, open, park-like glade, traversed by pathways which wandered thence up the surrounding ascents, or away into untraceable woods,—were like some palace grounds of a dream-legend. We drove on and on, until we came to the low, outstretching front of a pretty, rambling hotel. It was the Baths of St. Gervais.

We were half-tempted to stay here, and put off even Chamounix. If we had had a little more time, we would have done so. But the lovely places, where one can see whole worlds of delight opening into possibility, that one passes by in Europe on the way to the few that one must choose,—they are like the

"children of the desolate," more in number than the realized and born. They lie along every route.

Margaret and Edith were nearly distracted with the beauty of this. "Oh, such days,—such mornings and evenings as we could have here!" they said.

But we only had our one brief ecstasy — and our dinner.

The diligence goes no farther. Carriages,—shabby old "voitures," but open, roomy, and comfortable,—waited for us, and appropriated our luggage while we dined. We found ourselves billeted to one over which two or three men, porters and "cochers," were squabbling when we came out, in the claiming and defense of our hand-baggage.

We got in as we were told, paid the nearest outstretched hands, which were probably the wrong ones; and our coachman, scrambling to his seat, drove us off out of the wolf-pack, as his own particular prey to be devoured at leisure.

Then began the afternoon that will forever be alive to us.

Up,—up,—up,—over the superb road, parapeted with low, solid mason-work, which the French Imperial Government built along mountain ledges overhanging, at dizzier and dizzier heights, the tumbling, plunging Arve.

Again we saw river and meadows and villages drop—drop beneath us as we climbed. Again we breasted mighty masses of fir-clothed steeps. The hills rolled slowly about us again in everchanging relation, closing and parting and folding against each other, as we threaded the water-defile, mounting steadily to a higher and yet higher line.

I cannot tell you exactly where we began to see it, or how long we rode first, finding wonder and loveliness enough to make us forget to expect or look for it again; but at some turn we saw suddenly hang above us in the very sky,—o'er all the other mountain tops,—that great white Mount of God!

And after that we never lost it.

Margaret and Edith stood up on the front seat of the carriage; the driver walked beside his horses; Emery Ann and I leaned from our cushioned corners at each side, as we climbed and followed in and out the road that lies like the ribbon of an Order across the shoulders of the outstanding hills gathered in

only a lesser lordliness about the Monarch too great and greatly retinued ever to be wholly manifest.

The nearer you approach to him, the farther he enfolds himself within his regal state. It is only by climbing some subordinate peak and looking over from afar, that you can see the spreading of his ermine that rolls itself away in leagues of splendor, and trace the flashing lines of his belting and bordering ice-jewels. But his head towers up into the heavens, wearing the sunshine for a crown; and his mighty shoulders fill and shut the arching space. There is no horizon. There is only a blue zenith, and Mont Blanc!

We came down into Chamounix in the sunset.

We descended by long windings, as we had climbed; only after penetrating those upreaching aisles among the crowding pinnacles, until it seemed as if the only goal could be some height that was to hold us everlastingly, we began to thread and drop downward, and to find ourselves once more above a valley, beyond whose opposite side the mountain ranges gathered their great skirts back again, while between came down the glaciers, —gray-white, with beryl gleams,— that had traveled through the ages from the far, eternal snow. From the bosom of the yet remote Mont Blanc, whose head, above and beyond all else, yet still so near in its impending height, hung over the little nestling village that we entered in the dusk.

We could not be taken in at once at Hotel Couttet, down in the mountain-brooded angle by the river, where we had chosen to make our stay. Chamounix was at its fullest. But there was a "dépendance" in the village, if we would lodge there till to-morrow, and come here for our meals.

So we drove on, up the narrow street with its holiday air of occupancy by strange, transient comers,—its open doors and lattice-windows,—its groups of guides and porters,—its carriage loads and mule parties of pleasers returning from their day's excursions; and stopped at a low, narrow entrance, like all the rest, over which projected a tiny balcony filled with blossoming plants. Inside, we found bare floors, scrubbed clean, large rooms scantily furnished, an upper hall opening by a long window upon the flower balcony, from which we saw the last rosy shine upon the crest of the great mountain.

As we stood there, a party of ladies and gentlemen passed below in the street; among them one stout dame, in a "chaise porteurs." It was the first one we had seen.

"Look here, Emery Ann!" I called to that worthy woman, who although Mont Blanc was smiling his last upon the little village which lives upon his greatness, was already carefully intrapping the portmanteau in our room within. "Here is the sort of thing you and I will be carried in to-morrow, perhaps."

"Lugged along like *that*! By two men! *Harnessed* they are; see the straps! And shaking like that? The woman looks as if she was made of jelly!"

"But you are not made of jelly, Emery Ann. You would n't shake. The men would bless their luck in getting light jobs like you and me. You could n't ride a mule, you see."

"I don't see anything about it yet. I'm sure I don't see myself in a thing like *that*." And with a bottle in one hand, and a sponge-bag in the other, just as she had answered my call, she went back to her portmanteau.

We were too tired to walk back to the hotel. So we ordered our suppers on trays, and the servants from the hotel brought them. Tea and rolls, butter and honey, very good cold chicken, and grapes. We set it out on the deal table in the middle of our front room, and managed nicely.

After tea, the woman of the house sent for the chief of the guides, and we arranged with him about to-morrow's excursion. He promised us good men and mules and chairs. Emery Ann submitted to she knew not what. Because she did not know the other thing either.

So to-morrow we were to go up the Montanvert.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SEA OF ICE.

.
. . . . WHAT a glorious morning lightened upon the sombre forest-haired heads, and the farther snow-shine of those towering Alps that overhung us ! And what delicious life sprang in us to meet the fresh, unknown delight of the day !

Margaret and Edith came forth like morning blooms ; everything about them, from their hair to their boots, with the morning touch upon it, and elastic with bright, neat readiness.

Underneath our windows, while we ate our breakfasts, we heard the hoofs of the mules and the voices of the men, early-punctual, but quite prepared to wait our pleasure.

The two girls drank coffee and put biscuits in their pockets ; they also made paper horns which they filled with large, sweet grapes, and begged Emery Ann and me to carry in our laps. They were too eager and excited to eat much.

Emery Ann and I behaved as wisely as we could ; but the "girl" asserted herself in me beyond what I had supposed possible, and I think Emery Ann was half pleasurably and half apprehensively "tuned up."

When our cavalcade moved down the village street, we felt as if the novelty to us were as great a novelty and conspicuousness to the lookers on, and that our advent in Chamounix was as funny and fine a frolic as the same equipment and setting off would have been in Dearwood or Hilslowe.

Margaret and Edith were both at home on horseback ; but the round seats of the railed saddles, and the yanking jolt of the mule-gait were things to begin over again with. A few rods, however, enabled them to adapt themselves to new conditions, and even to put their pretty figures into a graceful

harmony with the otherwise ungainly motion. For there is nothing ungainly, after all, but inharmoniousness. A good will is becomingness; you can grow old, — you can be poor, — with a consent which is a grace; why not ride a mule?

Emery Ann and I were swinging in the square chairs with sacking seats softened by cushions; our shawls at our backs, and our feet on the narrow foot-boards that swung also, by short cords. The men, with the poles on which the chairs were set slipped through loops of leather hung from broad shoulder-bands, and grasping the pole-ends in their strong fingers, had fallen into a measured stride to which it was our work of grace to get accustomed; for at first it seemed to me that a fine little snap happened in my ears and the back of my head at every second footfall; but it wore off as we proceeded, and I began to exult in a pedestrianism I could never have accomplished for myself, and to feel as if all the play of the muscles and the free, unlabored swing of the walk, and the joy of assured power over the splendid distance that lay forth before us to be gathered in step by step, were my very own. It was like being a strong man, with a full credit of strength to draw upon, instead of a feeble woman who pays painfully as she goes, and realizes her shortening limit with every disbursement.

The meadows, — the long field-paths through the farm-places, — the far-off foot of the hills whose heads leaned over us closely when we could see their heads only, — the wild climb up their sides by undiscerned ways to be unraveled as we followed them, — the distant ridges and summits, — all were ours; yes, and every little blade and flower and mosscup and pebble upon the path, as they are only to those who walk. I was entering into a pleasure the mere mechanical part of which I had not known since I was a little tireless, springing child, or a girl full of gay energy and delight in doing. And beside all, — *more-over*, — it was among the Alps, and into the very glory of them. Do you catch the joy with me, Rose? I hope so.

Two porters carried each chair, and two for each, to alternate in service, walked. We had, therefore, an imposing train.

We passed through a kind of stile, or gate, and crossed a farm-yard, after we left the village; then we traversed the re-

mainder of the valley intervale; then moved along under the very base of a mighty mountain, till we struck the beginning of a "zigzag," and began to ascend. As we turned the second sharp corner, and the mules came just below and beside us, in following, Edith called up to me, —

"How do you feel, auntie?"

"I feel," I answered, "as if I were being carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

They laughed, merrily enough; but I was in sober, blessed earnest.

"Emery Ann! How do *you* like it?" called Edith again.

"Well — it ain't so ridiculous to do, as it was to look at. Most things ain't," returned the honest-minded woman, serenely.

"There is n't a bit of it to skip, is there?" said Margaret. "Just look over the valley there, against that other wall of mountains. And see away up over their tops and down upon them, how the clouds roll and tumble! It is all blue over us; but they have their own separate weather. It looks black enough, does n't it? Is it that it will make bad weather here, think you?" she asked in French of her guide, — one of the relay-men managing the mules.

"It is very possible, — later," he answered. "But perhaps, no. They are thunder-storms on the other side of the mountains, there."

This was comforting, to Emery Ann and me, who are both afraid in thunder-storms. But as you can tell nothing about the caprices of clouds and mountain tops in these regions, where, as Margaret said, every peak has its own weather, — we resolved to abide in our own sunshine, and watch the darkening majesty over there as a part of that sublimity we had come out to see.

We heard low, long, echoing growls repeating themselves behind the great ramparts, and the black and gray masses of vapor surged over their brims, as if overflowing a mighty basin from which they might spill, but not lift themselves away. At home, over our blue hills, such a cloud as one of those would have climbed in an hour or two and swept across the country with its shower. To see it boil up in the southwest would be

to be sure of its coming. But here it clung to its mountain cradle, whose ridge divided even the firmament upon that side from the firmament upon this.

We were sometimes lost in the deep shade of fir thickets, through or across which, ever from right to left and from left to right, ascended the sharply angled pathway; as if by some law of harmony in things, a human foot track up a mountain side must make a line like that of the lightning when it comes down over its cloud-mountains upon these rocky sides and summits, seizing its points where it finds them, and rushing to and fro in its keen swift zigzags.

Sometimes we followed an open ledge, and then below us lay the whole lovely valley with its streams and villages, from Les Ouches at the southern mouth of it to Argentières northward, on the road to Tête Noire and Col de Balme.

Over across, the enormous elevations of the Brevent and the Flégère, and the sharp Aiguilles of their range, shooting up their dagger thrusts into the azure softness or piercing the clouds like huge lances seizing trophies out of heaven,—reared and stretched along the sky; while above our heads the awful spires of the Aiguille Verte and the Aiguille du Dru measured the upper depth to a profound that no mere blue void suggests the mystery of.

The strange *neighborhood* of mighty forms set over against each other, opened here yet more marvelously to us that revelation of the heights which I felt and spoke of in our first approach to Alp-presences.

Face to face with these near, huge bulks, or more striking still, looking away up, with heads bent backward, to their impending immensity, one feels as if the celestial globes, changed from far fire-points to real earth-masses in their near-coming, were wheeling alongside our planet; as if great arks of heaven were sailing by.

"We are 'realizing' our Astronomy, now," I said to Edith as she came close behind me, and I turned my head to see her face and the wonder in it. "It is like a fleet of worlds."

"I did not know what it was making me think of," replied Edith. "You always say a thing, and then I find out that I was feeling of it in the dark."

The four men set down our chairs upon a level space, side by side, and while the four others came forward and leisurely adjusted their straps and picked us up, Emery Ann and I had a word together.

"What is it like?" I asked her. She had not heard a syllable before.

For all reply, she began to sing lines of the thrilling old Methodist hymn:—

"O what ship is this that comes sailing by?

O Glory! Hallelujah!

O what ship is this that comes sailing by?

O Glory! Hallelujah!

'Tis the Great Ship of Zion, hallelujah!

'Tis the Great Ship of Zion, hallelujah!

She has saved as many thousands, and will save as many more,

For Jesus is her Captain, hallelujah!"

"Only," she said, dropping into quiet, impressed speech,—
"there's a whole squadron of them. It's as if the Lord and all his prophets were sailing down to judgment and salvation."

Her weird religious imagination of the thing did not surprise me. She had grown up amid the mysticism and passion of revivals and camp-meetings, and the tremendous imagery of Revelation had been the poetry of her youth.

"It is an awful and a wonderful 'passing,' Emery Ann," I said.

"Like what Moses saw when the Lord put him in the cleft of the rock," she answered.

Edith caught an infection from Emery Ann's hymn, and all at once her sweet, clear voice sounded through the wood-stillness as we entered a forest path again,—

"O'er mountain-tops the Mount of God

In latter days shall rise,

And bring the Canaan that we love

To our beseeching eyes."

Margaret joined her rich contralto tones. I shall never play that old psalm-tune again out of the book at home on a Sunday evening, without feeling myself among these Alps, with the vision as of the City, indeed, descending out of heaven.

We rounded a great sweep, and came under a precipice wall

"Behold! the Sea of Ice!" said my porter, behind me.

Over a wide brink we saw the frozen restlessness; the upheaved, broken waves, and surges; the swift lines of a moveless current; the green gleams; the vast downpour of the solid cataract from far secret heights, sloping and urging with a mighty leisure toward the waiting valley. From abysses above, over which the Domes and Needles leaned and towered, to abysses below, it swept past us in a dread stillness.

We had turned at right angles to the valley of Chamounix. Over opposite, now, was the grim bulwark of the Chapeau, to which should cross upon this glacial sea. The tumultuous heaps and pillars of the Mont Blanc range on the right, above us, — and the barbicans of the Brevent and the Flégère, and the Red Needles behind them, beyond Chamounix upon the left, closed in, seemingly, around the icy expanse, and shut it to its own solitude. Whether in this world or out of it, we could scarcely realize; so separate and awful was the place.

Our chairs were set down beside a little chalet-inn; the girls were lifted from their mules; there was nothing to do but to go in for our noon rest. And inside there were toys and ornaments of Mont Blanc agates, and wood-carvings, and dinner. Other parties of people were here also. We had been meeting excursionists on mules and on foot, now and then, as we had ascended; trickles of the world-stream that is spreading itself everywhere among these solemn wastes. And here at the culm and climax, was the world's traffic also. There are money-changers in every temple.

Excellent omelettes and coffee we had, though, and found needful. We bought sleeve-buttons, too, and little cups, and vases, exquisitely wrought and polished; also such bits of carved work as we could easily carry away. We found, beside, some striking stereoscopic views of mountain and glacial scenery. We knew we should like them after we got home, though in the face of the original realities, the bits of pasteboard were as merest rubbish.

Chairs and mules were to be given up here; the latter to be sent round by some other way, to meet us on the Chapeau; the former to be borne empty across the perilous ice-path.

They carried Emery Ann and me as far down as they dared, and a fearful clinging it was to rail and foot-board, as the chain swung and slanted in the steep, slippery descent. Reaching nearly a level, we were glad to give them up; and with a guide grasping each of us by the wrist, we began our walk across the glacier.

Sometimes we climbed huge blocks thrown confusedly together; sometimes we stepped across narrow rifts down which we could look and see them widen into caverns, or cut straight down to interminable depths. We walked around little lakes and pools upon the melting surface; we struggled across wild *débris*; we paused and looked up and down the vast opening that the torrent made, and in which it lay with its petrified cascades, and long, sweeping slants, hemmed in on every side, apparently, by the gigantic and eternal heights. Everywhere a great seethe of elemental force; a press of power; the working of an age-long change, so mighty that it was still; so tremendous that it seemed arrested, — paralyzed. We were in the secret places, — the store-house and laboratory of matter and of time. These earth-masses were the heart of a continent; its vital point when it began to form. These ice-veins are its outbeats.

We were lifted and helped over the wide moraine; we came to permanent cliffs again; we struck the path along the Chapéau, and came presently to the Mauvais Pas. A narrow, overhanging footway, on a mere ledge-line along the face of a precipice. Iron rails stapled to the rock gave us a hold to hang by if foot or footway failed. Otherwise, a crumbling fragment, — a misstep, — would plunge one down, down, a distance that one dare not look, among boulders and ice-masses, and opening mouths of soundless, deep-blue gulfs.

The clouds that had rolled and muttered and flashed, on the other line of peaks across the valley all day long, had at last hovered over their edges, dropped upon the valley in quick showers, and were climbing and thronging now among the summits around us.

It grew dark, and there came drops of rain, and lightning played across the shrouded Needles, and about the heads of the

distant Domes. The Montanvert which we had quitted was wrapped already in a heavy darkness, and the great Ice-Sea lay in a cold shadow of yet profounder desolation.

Beyond the Mauvais Pas we found our mules and chairs, and were glad to be seated and hurried on.

I looked at Emery Ann to see how she bore it. If we had been at home, we should have been timidly shutting windows and doors, drawing chairs into the safe middle of the room, — and saying to each other as reassuringly as we could, that it “might not be a very heavy shower; we should not get the worst of it here, perhaps; the blackest cloud was going round.”

She looked a little pale, but not agitated.

“Do you mind it?” I asked.

“I don’t feel,” she said calmly, “as if *we* were any sort of account.”

That was it. Among these tremendous pinnacles, what were we, for a mark or a minding? The storm had its own great business to do.

We came down, upon the trot and the run, to a table-shelf on which stood a chalet. We were hurried off saddles and seats, the mules led under a shed, the chairs turned up against the rock, and we were put into a door just as the drive of the wind and the rush of the rain swept down upon the face of the mountain, and smote it with an instant deluge.

There were two other parties shut up with us. The room was smoky, and dark with the storm, except when the broad, red flashes lit it up and showed the streaming landscape, — if fir-tops, and crag-outlines, and dropping, ragged hems of breaking clouds, all mingled as in one level, make a landscape, — through the little windows.

The guides stood out under the shed with the mules; we dried and warmed our feet, and then turned over more stereoscopic pictures, and chose as well as we could in the partial light, and bought a dozen or two; and at last one of our men came in and said the rain was over, and we must hasten ourselves to reach the valley before dark.

It was just glorious!

Coming out into the very trail of the tempest, — the mount-

ain all one rush of hurrying water, — rocks and leaves dripping, glittering ; torn vapors, caught in their flight against the gnarl of forests and the spikes of cliffs, struggling like scattering phantoms to escape, their riot over ; a sweet, full thunder of pouring, falling streams everywhere, and a shine of foam glancing out from a hundred little rifts and plunges all about us ; presently, as we descended, — coming upon the line of mountain torrents that laced, and crossed, and twined and separated as they went, — accompanied on either hand with beautiful singing rapids and white cataracts, — never can one imagine, except by just such doing and seeing, what an afternoon that was, as we ourselves, with an exulting swiftness, were borne along down the falling zigzag that threaded the wild, lovely forest of the Chapeau !

Back and forth, — into green depths and then out to points whence we looked behind and up against the vast slope and tumble of the glacier, — white and green, and even opalesque now, in the shine of water and the level, golden light that shot upon it from under western cloud-fringes ; seeing away in upmost distance the awful grandeur out of which it is born continually, — the frown of those unspeakable shafts, — the tumult of clouds and mountain shapes struggling against each other ; and all this seeming mightier, more wonderful, as it receded, and we neared the valley lying in its sweet, mellow color and twilight rest ; it was a gift of glory, — a showing of the great and secret works the Father doeth !

That was what I thought of all the while ; what a day of telling and of giving it had been ; of taking up into the mysteries ; and how this day had come of years that had led to it ; that we had been brought here by ways we hardly knew, for this to be bestowed upon us.

One remembrance quickened another. I thought how the Word was in all the world, and that the Word is the Lord bending Himself down to men ; that the Father loveth the Son of his humanity, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth ; how the Spirit takes of them continually and shows them unto us ; and how greater things than any yet He will show us, because it pleaseth Him to give us all the Kingdom !

How that in this word, — this Christ-presence of God's meaning, — all our life is hid ; that all is ours, and we are his, and He is God's ; that we are sons and daughters, and know not what we shall be, — heirs of the unknown ; but that as He shall appear we shall become like Him, seeing Him as He is ; and seeing in Him our own life, which is of his, manifested in his glory.

I was never so deeply joyful. Great things and little, — the gleam of the glacier, and the rush of water, and the twitter of birds, and the forest odors, as we came down into these small blessednesses out of silences and majesties, — the pleasant motion, carried by that kindly, careful strength, — all made me so happy with a feeling of how endless the hope and possibility are of the things that we shall surely come to ; since they are made, and made for the children !

One can wait again, for a life-time, after one such day.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DAILY BREAD: AND DOUBLES.

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THE next morning threatened rain; but we were longing for the mountains again; we were rested by a deep, long sleep; we sent for our head guide and asked him what could be done.

"It may make good weather by and by," he said. "Madame would like, perhaps, to mount the Flégère?"

We would all like that; indeed, nothing short of a settled pour would dissuade us. We were quite resolved it should be clear; or if not quite clear, that it should be still more beautiful to see the fogs and clouds as they rolled away. We would *rather* watch it coming clear, than have it so at the outset.

Also, it was Saturday; and by Tuesday, at farthest, we meant to make our journey over the Tête Noire to Martigny. We must allow for rest, and for possible worse weather.

A lovely sky of shifting white and breaking blue, at half-past nine, decided us. Chairs and mules were brought to the door again; Emery Ann's face was quietly ecstatic as she settled herself in the thing that night before last she could not imagine herself being "lugged along in."

"You like it pretty well, after all, don't you, Emery Ann?" said I.

"I'm *reconciled*," she answered; "it appears to correspond; and corresponding is the main thing."

A child's blissfulness spread over her face as the porters lifted her up. I really think her smile had a gentle lip-smack with it.

The level road through the meadowed valley,—the river stealing quietly alongside,—the lines of mountain-wall stretch-

ing on either hand, their tops lost in the tumbling foam of clouds, — all gave us a pure, simple delight of just being and moving in it, whether we should see Mont Blanc from the Flégère or not.

We turned off the road at the spreading base of the mountain. The path began among loose boulders and sloping ledges that stretched back a good way in a rugged bareness that was neither cliff nor pasture, — only a great beginning ; — a heaped-up pedestal from which the real height sprang, sweeping it with its forest-skirts.

We plunged suddenly into the woods, and the path which had wandered irregularly upward among the curves and breaks of the foundation-hill, took its sharp zigzags which “meant business.”

It was the delight of the day before upon the Montanvert, repeated. Repeated in words, it could not be what it was to live it over again.

The sweet, wet, stillness, — the wildness, — the trickle of water-threads, — the shine and flash of little falls, — the lovely ferns and mosses, and the Alpine blossoms smiling out, — the smell of the mountain, rich with strength of herb and mineral, — the sense of *attaining* at every step as we climbed, — the outlooks and uplooks, as the white drifts rolled and lifted along the opposite chain, or the towering Aiguilles of our own side bent their awful faces suddenly over us between torn vapors ; — it was the same wonderful, ever fresh rapture, which cannot be put into freshness of speech and writing, because you have only the same words over again, and there is no dictionary for the added meanings of *recurrence*. It was only another of the days of Switzerland ; which are like no other days that you can spend on earth.

We left off saying anything about it to each other. Edith and Margaret jogged along upon their mules, and Emery Ann and I swung blessedly in our chairs, and there was no sound among us for ever so long but the hard, full breath of the porters, as regular and strong as their stride, and the fall of their feet in its sure rhythm which took from us all misgiving for them, and the crunch of the gravelly soil or the rattle and roll of dislodged pebbles under hoof and heel,

Half way up, we stopped as usual at a little chalet, where the men had beer, and we ate fresh raspberries and drank new milk. A woman, with a little boy, keeps this lonely hut through the summer time, taking daily custom of travelers. The boy had hurt himself by a fall among the rocks, and lay upon a bed in a little inner room. I think his leg had been broken. Of course we gave him a special *douceur*. I hope it was not what he was there for.

An hour or more of further climbing, every second of which was a live pleasure as we went, but which cannot be put down in three hundred and sixtieths, alas! for you, — brought us up and out upon an open crown on which stands the miserable little barn-like inn, and over which sweep the unchecked winds.

It was fearfully cold up here. The mists were rushing about like things that had pre-emptive right there, and upon whose business we had come untimely, before they had got cleared up for the day; so that we could expect neither way nor favor. We were in the weather-office, where the kind of day it was to be was made; and it was not settled yet. So we must submit to be hustled and chilled, and have the ends of clouds slapped against us, and take shelter in the "Cross of the Flégère," and be glad of a little warming at its kitchen fire, between our eager sallies to see how it was going to turn out.

The noon came clear. That is, as one calls clear, when not watching for mountain outlines and snow-peaks fifteen thousand feet high. We stood in the sunshine and saw over against us the gray-white ice-rivers pouring down the sides of the mighty range whose crests were hidden, but above whose veil of shifting, tantalizing clouds that showed now here, now there, a dazzle of huge proportions, shot the rending Needles, to me a continual startle of sublimity, and more grand than any other Alpine form.

We tracked the way we had gone yesterday over opposite upon the Montanvert, and across the Sea of Ice, and down the dark Chapeau: we turned and found ourselves beneath the Aiguilles Rogues.

The broken heaps and drifts and whirls of vapor, mingling with outbursting visions of snow-masses and splintering rocks

and sky-piercing shafts, were possibly more superb to see, in the tumult of indefinite revelation, than any widest outline sharp-set against blue space. We could conceive such outline from our maps and panoramas; there was a limit to it, however glorious; there was no limit to this splendid chaos of snow and crag and cloud and struggling sun-shafts under the narrowed heaven.

We remained nearly two hours at the top; then consoled ourselves with thinking that if we had had the other view we could not have had this; and taking it thankfully as our portion, we assented to the guide's proposal to go down.

Edith and Margaret got into great glee as their mules' paces quickened in the descent; then they dismounted and took a real run, — springing lightly along the rough pathway, over stock and stone, and turning the sharp angles as swallows wheel upon their wings.

They laughed, and called merrily to each other; the guides grew merry too, and, holding the bridles of the discarded beasts, trotted first, and then fairly scampered, down the zigzags; our porters caught the feeling of the fun, and trotted too.

"It's 'this way the water comes down,' is n't it, auntie?" shouted Edith, up across the parallels between us. "Don't you feel just like a little brook, Emery Ann?"

Emery Ann clung spasmodically to the arms of her chair and braced her feet against the swaying foot-board. She looked in a rigidity of half-remonstrative delight. Her eyes were set in a twinkle, and her mouth had stiffened in a smile. She tried to answer, and the words did come brook-fashion, as if tumbled along over the stones.

"I don't — know — but what — I do! But I don't — believe — I've any business — to!"

"We chatter, chatter, as we go," sang Edith, poising herself at a new turn of the path. "That's very good chatter, Emery Ann! Clattering, chattering, shattering, pattering, — men, women, and mules, and the girls on before — and this way the water comes down at Lodore!"

She sprang on again, dancing down the rapid decline. Margaret was before her; their veils and garments fluttered as they went, crossing each other to and fro along the successive bends;

they looked so gay and tiny, like mere butterflies, under the great frown, — or tender might, which was it? of the mountain; under the far-up, dreadful outburst from the deep heaven of the horned heads of the pinnacles of Charlanoz!

We sobered down, as the brooks do, coming upon the rough extense of the slower slope; and wound about the broken face of it between its mounds and boulders.

As we struck the valley level, we looked up and saw the sky almost cloudless; when we reached our hotel, Mont Blanc shone pure and solemn, with mistless snows, right overhead.

We had gone far away to see his face; we came back, and found it leaning over us.

They had made room for us at the hotel, as they had promised, while we were gone; and the porters had brought down our light luggage from the "dépendance." We had left our big trunks joyously at Geneva, with the bankers; when we reached Vernayaz, — but that is farther on. I won't even anticipate by the mention of a shawl-strap.

They gave us rooms on the Mont Blanc side, with a little balustrade along the windows. All three opened one from another. We got out brushes and sponges, and made ourselves comfortable, and waited eagerly for six o'clock.

The Julienne soup, with Parmesan cheese, — the mutton, — the Brussels sprouts, — the vol-au-vent, — the "épinards," or fine-chopped spinach made delicate with butter, cream, and beaten egg, — the wine of Asti, — were delicious to our hunger, but an incongruity of luxury, — a shock of translation back to the flesh-pots of Egypt, after the glory of the desert. The chatter of tourists, in French, German, and English, up and down the crowded table d'hôte, was strange after the silences and whispers of the mountain sides, the fir woods, the falling streams, and the sweeping winds.

But no stranger, I remembered, — no more incongruous, — than the chatter we come back into, — the common words and common thoughts again, — out of silences and whispers and visions that lie and breathe and open around us in the places where we get away, "led of the spirit into the wilderness;" returning into our bodily recognitions, and thinking perhaps it is we only who have been out and up, because others have come back also.

Every one of these people, most likely, had been forth as we had, among the glories; and every one, as we, had come back to eat their dinner.

We rested the seventh day, and found it holy.

Emery Ann and Edith turned their beds around so that they could lie against the pillows and look out over the court-yard and low garden of the hotel, to the deep-forested hills that rose behind and over them to the great White Presence that filled absolutely all higher space they might have seen. The very radiance of the day seemed not reflected, but flowing forth from itself. Mont Blanc is not splendid; it is absolute splendor.

My room was the last of the suite, and the door opening to Edith's was in the window angle. The fire-place was next, the chimney serving both rooms. I could not well arrange a position like theirs; but I was very tired, and lay quietly upon my bed in the dark corner, *thinking* toward Mont Blanc.

Margaret came in and found me.

"We must have a better place for you, *ma mère*."

She has taken a fancy to call me as the nuns call their mother superior. "There *are* spiritual motherhoods," she said to me, when she so christ-ened me; "and in that, as in ever so many other things, the Catholics have put a practice upon a fact. And the spiritual mothers are quite as apt, in the world as in convents, to be set apart for their vocation, — not mothers after the flesh. There, too, the Romans have a reality in their system. I think if we could dig out the truth under all their overlappings, we would find, maybe, the foundations that the angel measured with the golden reed."

The child has insight. There *is* spiritual motherhood. And the mysteries of the Church were first the mysteries of the Kingdom. So, though the motherness comes down through me rather than of me, it makes me happy that she should call me "*ma mère*." And because we two are put together, and both our mothers are within there, in the Golden City, I can believe that behind her impulse is an instinct that reaches farther than she sees, and that through my *daughterhood* she finds an open channel to and from the love she wants, and that seeks toward

her. I take the word then, but I do not stop it; and I told her so.

"I must fix you up as we used to do at school."

She drew a chair to the window, tipped it with its back to the floor and its legs in the air, making a long incline; upon this she placed a pillow, lengthwise, and below spread folded shawls. Then she took my little air-cushion, half filled it, and laid it at the upper end of the improvised lounge.

"We didn't have *these* things," she said as she did so; "that would have been too complete. Now, let me put you down here, and you'll say it's next best to the chaise à porteurs."

Indeed it was; and if ever you are thoroughly tired out and common chairs don't comfort you, I advise you to try this.

Only you cannot try it as I did, down under that low window through which I looked up into the heart and face of that high Purity, — that awful, blessed, spotless shining!

Hotel Couttet is snuggled down in a little nook, — something like that river-hollow at Hilslowe Mills, where the railway runs in, and we go down under the bridge to take the cars. Only you must fancy, rising up above Keber's Woods, a great wall of higher forest that stands straight against the east and north, and keeps the sunrise behind it until seven o'clock of the longest summer morning; and above that again — not *rising*, as that does, but heaven-hung and reaching down, — the snow-blaze of the White Mountain.

I turned my face upward toward it, with I could not tell what feeling at my heart; whether of worship lifted, or the gracious down-flowing upon me of that from which worship is born. In the real mystery between God and his souls, must not the two meet and be the same?

Margaret drew my knit shawl round me, and disposed my skirts in lines of order without which I cannot ever wholly rest, and brought over a portmanteau for a seat for herself, and put herself beside me.

"You look very nice, ma mère," she said, softly, and smoothed her fingers across my hair with a light, tender touch. She knew I did not keep that, either, all to myself.

"You have made me blessedly comfortable," I answered, turning my face and my thought toward her. And presently I said, "I do not think you are 'cold,' Margaret."

She understood.

"Not where I am warm," she said, smiling.

"I find you not brusque, but very gentle. Why does not every one?"

"One can be gentle where one is 'easily entreated ;'" she said, with another of those allusions that often betray how familiarly she knows the Scripture phrases. "I don't like to be *smooth*."

"Would it be bad to be? Just not—what is it? I can't say rough,—but *un-smooth*. Toward your mamma, for instance? Just not recusant of affectionateness,—such as you show me already."

"People have *told* me to be smooth with her," said Margaret. "They put it into my head when I was a little child. And that was how I learned not to be. I am not rude, or unkind, though ; that would not be any truer than the other."

"No, indeed. It is not less of anything, but more, that you might be."

"I could n't. I can't bear things on purpose. Mamma was always smooth with my father ; and it was not always easy to be. She said things turned out more comfortably for a little patience ; and so they do,"—she added, applying her accidental word with a smile ; "but I can't be smooth to be comfortable."

"You can better be *rough* to be comfortable?"

A flash of some unlooked-for understanding came into her face. It grew very earnest,—very honest : I could see that she impeached a jury of her own clear, strong perceptivities, and swore them in instantly, to render verdict.

"Do you think that is it?" said she. "I never suspected myself of being that."

"There are different kinds of comfortableness," I said. "Certainly, some are more, and some less, worthy. But that one may be comfortable in one's—self-respect"—

"Say 'pride,'" Margaret put in, with the tone of one simply suggesting an exacter term of language.

"Ought one," I continued, smiling, while her face was quite unmoved, and her eyes rested on the far mountain whiteness, — "ought one to infringe or refuse the comfortableness of another? Or to be quite true," — I put it differently, — "should one hold back the truth of kindness for fear of seeming — *seeming*?"

"You cut straight down, with a sharp edge," said Margaret.

"Yes. There is a word which is quick, to the dividing between joint and marrow," I answered. "But not my word."

"I see. The truth may lie even finer than that. People laugh at splitting hairs, but absolute honesty may be between the outside and the in of a thing all but invisible. Yet I don't think we can analyze like that as we go along."

"We could n't lay out the path by arbitrary measurement. But there are movements whose impulse is such absolute truth, that men can only *follow* them by an exactness which considers the thousandth of a hair's breadth. And it must be that we are meant to be led and moved as surely. But for that we must forget all about seemings."

"Only you want people to see the truth in you. And if you only give them the truth of the kindness, they won't see — the truth of the truth."

"I think we have to leave it so. We are not to disfigure our faces, — our outward expression of ourselves, — that men may know what we fast from; it is enough that the Father is in the secret with us, and will take care of what comes into openness."

"And that," said Margaret, keenly, "may be the disfigurement. We must let it, if it must. We are to *put on* neither smoothness nor roughness; but of the two, I like Esau better than Jacob, if he did lose his birthright. It comes back to what Mr. Truesdaille said, — to be 'certain true, all through,' (do you know I have just boiled it down to those four words for a proverb?) and let the sum prove itself. Now, I want to tell you what I've been making you 'blessedly comfortable' for."

She took from her pocket two letters. The mail from Geneva last evening, had brought us American letters from our bankers there, which we had expected before we left.

"There is a little piece in this," — showing me one directed to herself, and covered with the postmarks of its long transit, — "and another in this," — holding up an envelope freshly written with her own hand, — "that I want you to look at."

"Stop a minute," said I, as she began unfolding. "To be 'certain true, all through,' I must tell you something first. I've a double, Margaret."

"I suppose so," she said, quietly. "And your double has a double. And away back, nobody knows where, they double into what everything comes from. It depends upon where you begin. I don't think I'm afraid of *your* doubles. At any rate, I'm glad enough of what gets down to me by their road."

"What a child you are! That is trusting!"

"Well, I don't expect anything actually to stop, you know. Money in a bank does n't do that. If it did, you might as well keep it in your own napkin. What you want is your interest. And that comes by their getting theirs. I'm not afraid of being *squandered*."

Did you ever know such a creature, — of nineteen years old, — Rose?"

"And so see what Harry writes. I want you to know him a little better. I have told him ever so much of you. This is in answer to a long letter I sent from Paris. It was mostly written, though, at Hastings and Dover. That — and that."

She gave me two pages out of the middle, and I read something like this: —

"That *was* a ride from London to Tunbridge! You made me feel as if I had had it with you. I've nothing half so good to share with you from this side. I'm afraid you'll always have to give more than you get, Madge, with me. And that brings me to the 'daily bread' business. I'm glad you find it, if I *am* only a dog under the table. You need n't think I despise it, though I can't break it for myself. I'm quite contented to take the crumbs from you, if you'll be at the trouble of 'crumbing up' for me. Is n't that what Solomon says a woman is for, — in the Birthday Chapter, you know? 'She giveth bread to her household?' Or meat, — which is it? It is all the same.

"You see I shall have to look to you, — if you'll let me. If

you would only say whether you will or not, — or whether you will ever say you will! For I believe it's a promise of a promise I have got to get first.

"Flo' fell in love at Saratoga. But it was with a girl. Everybody else did; she *was* a little stunner! I don't think I fell far; one can't, when all the world tumbles in one heap. It is n't my style, exactly, to 'tumble after.' That is what the Gills do. If I can't be Jack, — even with a broken head, — I don't care to be anybody. I believe it is n't much use with me, either, unless I can grow up with a girl, and take it quietly all along. It is like the crumbs. I have to be provided for. And I can't expect to grow up with many more!

"You must take it in nonsense, Madge; I shall never put it into sermons. If I do any growing, it will have to be along with you, as it began.

"I'm glad, though, you enjoy the coach-riding, and the four-in-hand, and all the pleasant, every-day part, too. For if ever we are — engaged, and the rest of it, — I shan't want you to have got beyond all that. Six days and a Sunday, you know, was the proportion it was put up in."

There was more of the same sort; bright, affectionate nonsense, in which appeared a quickness of apprehension that might take hold of whatsoever it would, and climb; but that was best content on an easy, happy level. I discerned in it what I think Margaret did not, though he told it out, as the riddle does, in so many words. That things must be made ready for him. Even love. He could not trouble himself with a contested desire, — with trying for a difficult happiness; he did not find it "his style" to fall in love with a crowd. And the very bread of life, — she must "crumb it up" for him!

I find Margaret herself so high, so rare, that I have not tolerance for this nice, jolly every-dayness in one who pretends to do his growing "along with her!"

If that "little stunner" should anyhow drop into a quieter track, out of a crowd, beside his own, I wonder what might come of it. I think he has plenty of time and space, yet, to grow up with another; or indeed, with several more!

I passed directly to her own letter which she laid open at these paragraphs: —

"I am very glad to give you the best of what I come to, Harry. Those lovely days in England were too much to keep to one's self, and I am glad I gave you the *very* best of them. I know it is 'six days and a Sunday' in this living of ours; but I think the Sunday *spreads*! I am sure there are more things even in the six days, than we made of them in our childhood, when they were only play-days. I suppose we shall both feel that the more as we go on. And if *either* of us finds friends or help higher than ourselves, to understand them by, we — being friends — shall share them with each other, shall we not?

"Please don't talk about a 'promise of a promise.' I do not think there can be such a thing, exactly. It must be a proving and a waiting. We must see how we are growing, before we know how far we can grow together. And there must be a united growth that is a sum of something, mustn't there, before you can call it a new planting in the world? Growing is n't waiting for the sunshine, Harry. It is a real reaching after it.

"I want you to take your man's place in life, just as I want to feel myself ready for a woman's. Then we shall find out if they depend upon each other. But we cannot promise *now* to promise *then*.

"I write plainly, exactly as far as I do see; that is right, I think, because we are friends. It does not need a promise to be that; we always have been. Perhaps we are 'best friends,' now; the best we know how to be; but how much more we *might* know how to be!

"I don't think, Harry, that my 'crumbing' would — or should — be enough for you. I should like, so dearly, to receive at your hands.

"And yet, it begins to seem to me, it may not be so much what people are to each other, — I mean in this looking to each other for the sharing, — as what they *look to together*. I could not give you anything of what this great white mountain gives to me, unless, either actually or by some picture I could make, you stood before its presence beside me. To look up to great things, and to feel a friend you care for looking with you, — that is the real sympathy. It is what we have at the Communion.

when we say, — ‘Therefore with angels and archangels;’ though we ourselves are so far below.”

She will either bring him, or leave him. But that she does not know, and nobody can say it to her. For her there is only the single, “certain true” step at a time. And this letter was one such. I told her so as I gave it back.

“Then it is right I should go on? For even this waiting is going on, you see. I have taken, somehow, his chances into my hands. I cannot fling them down, and not care. I must do the next right thing by him as it comes. I ‘just must follow my signboard.’”

That is a saying of Emery Ann’s.

“Follow, Margaret,” I answered; “but do not run beyond. One passes the right turn, sometimes, that way.”

I think, Rose, that there is now and then a romance of boy and girl love which runs on into manhood and womanhood, and fulfills itself. But I do not believe in these romances, as a general thing. There comes a time when the girl is suddenly so much more than the boy, — when she has got so much farther. And once waiting for him to catch up, — ah! that may be an angel’s ministry, but it is not a woman’s blessedness! The world has got woefully twisted on its moral axis, and things may have come to be right and needful that were not before the flood; the sin-flood, I mean, — not the water-flood; it is of such little consequence that that had to follow, and so did. Adam was first formed, then Eve; that was the holy order. Now a woman, — Mother Goose has it, as she has most things, — goes and takes “a little husband no bigger than her thumb.” She finds him a pint pot, and she bids him drum. She ties his hose, and — well! do you think that woman is content? Do you think her “soul goes marching on” to that drumming?

Yet I did not dare tell Margaret that this was not her work, just because I might imagine for her a happiness to take instead. The invincible truth itself must show her the whether or no.

There are natures made to tread the winepress alone; to take no blessed cup from other human hand.

She herself may have to grow by giving; and only in that unseen communion of the saints find her full fellowship.

She says truly that she has put him to a kind of probation; and now she must wait; at least long enough to see how he will receive it. That, of itself, is a binding,—a promise. Every act of living is. It is a pledge to the next; we cannot help it.

And meanwhile, for herself?

I feel as if the waking to her full womanly instinct were to come. The *motherly* springs first in us, strange as that may be; the child has it with her dolls. Margaret Regis has a mother-love for this boy Harry. It has turned into that; she does not know it; she cannot give him up; she is keeping faith bravely, waiting for the other. She is looking back,—listening for the morning breeze that blew out of the east; but what of the rushing, mighty wind that may sweep up out of the south upon her?

Rose! I am getting to be a part of this, myself. If in anything you see it clearer than I do, tell me.

There was more, afterward, which happened to keep these thoughts tossing restlessly in my mind.

But I will write further a few days hence.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM ARVE TO RHONE.

.
. . . . THERE was nothing but the mountains between earth level and farthest heaven the morning we left Chamounix.

Not the least fleck or tatter of mist was afloat about snow peak or gray, shivered spine, or in all the brilliant depth of air.

Compassed about with their great cloud of witness, we passed up the valley. We looked back continually to where the vastness of Mont Blanc enthroned itself, in body of solid light. It lay behind us southwardly, stretching its tremendous shape between range and range.

At the top of this river-aisle, we came into the little village of Argentières.

Here pours down the third great river of ice, counting from the south; the glacier of Argentières; heaving and sweeping downward from those far, infinite snows, between the Aiguilles Verte and Chardonnet.

From the village we turned away toward the left, opposite the glacier, and began the long forenoon climb up the difficult, steep zigzags of the Montets. There used only to be a bridle-path at this part of the way; but they promise you carriage now; and then make you get out and walk as often as they can.

We were glad enough to trust to our own feet at some of the precipitous scrambles, and we overtook an English family party with their private equipage, who were forced, poor things, — mother and several daughters, — to toil painfully up miles of the ascent over which their slight, handsome little horses proved utterly incapable of dragging the loaded carriage. The father, leading the tired beasts, behind which the dainty open vehicle,

filled with their bags and wraps, jolted perilously, — looked anxious enough.

“It was a great mistake,” the elder lady said to me, as I paused and spoke commiseratingly. That was in the afternoon climbing the Forclaz, beyond Tête Noire; we felt like priests and Levites, passing by and leaving them there; we never knew what became of them, or where they could possibly have got to for the night; but we were powerless to assist them.

Along the high ridge of Tête Noire, — under it rather, for the mountain road clings to the steep side along a narrow ledge and passes, by a hewn gallery, through the huge black profile of the cliff, — we looked down as we went, into the deep, wild lovely valley with its river and village, a mile below us, plummet-fall.

The black cliff-head itself was not so curiously wonderful to me as this beautiful little secluded world beneath.

The forest and valley worlds are as infinite in their revelations as the upper realms of peaks and snows. You look in, and down, and up, to places of which you have this one momentary glimpse as you go by, and shall never see again; the instant has for you just what you can grasp and take away. The hidden marvels draw you into dreams of things that the very next day have half withdrawn themselves as dreams do, and half remain, an intangible, eternal delight.

I could not tell you, even now, just where it was upon our way, that I saw this: — a fir-grove, reaching up a long, steep slope on our right hand; the slender stems, like pillars, shooting straight from among low rocks, cushioned every one with exquisite mosses, and lying piled upon one another up the acclivity as no hand could pile upholsteries of velvet; these plummy in every crevice with nodding ferns of cunningest sweet tracery, and with springing, swinging vines, that, tossed by the wind, caught at the tree-boles and held fast, still rushing upward in swift growth, and flung themselves into wild, delicate interchange and interlacing, back and forth, above; over all and beyond, a gleam of bluest heaven smiling in across the hill-top; — a retreat of elf-land, where your own fancies rush in and wing themselves and take fairy-possession, and enact you a hundred tales and

poems as you pass that once of all your life ; — can you see this, Rose, by my faint seeing and yet fainter telling ?

Or can you see what we came to in the twilight, after we had crossed the crest, or col, and came down in swift swirls or lashes, to and fro, into the other valley of Martigny ?

Can you see that road along which we swung, doubling itself sharply against the steep, with strips of rocky, woody mountain pasture belted between its lines, and here and there, in lower and lower distances, flocks of cattle spotting the inclines, their far-off bells tinkling one to another a multitudinous sweet harmony ?

Can you see the Rhone lying there beneath, stretching itself between the quiet towns and along the still, green spaces, after its foaming rush from its glacial cradle down through remote Alpine gorges and cavern clefts ? Can you fancy yourself dropping, dropping, with each roadsweep, down through all, toward it, — from terrace to terrace, pasture to pasture, and then into shade of vineyard and orchard, till the way is walled in on either hand, and all at once you are in the narrow streets of a Swiss town again ?

But not to stop. We had talked it over on the way, and determined to sleep at Vernayaz ; or rather, at the Gorge du Trient, half a mile or more this side ; to see the wonderful rift through which the river plunges and has torn its way — or found it torn, — nine miles through the mountain heart, and hundreds of feet below the daylight, from the beautiful gloom of the forest of Trient, wherein we had threaded our way among such pictures as I have made faint pen-touches of.

We passed the cavern-like entrance as we crossed the little bridge, and drove up to the front of the gay, new hotel.

The sky was yet bright with saffron and pink, and they told us there would be time to go up the river gallery before dusk. So we quickly paid our voiturier, entered our names, and had our rooms assigned without seeing them ; left our small luggage to be carried up while we were absent, and hurried away again, — four *girls* if there were two of us, — into — we knew not what.

The mountain gateway opened black and arched above our heads, and at our feet leaped forth the river.

Just inside began the railed, narrow plankway, set against the rock with beams, and clamps of iron, and overhanging the deep stream, ink-dark already in the shadow.

The walls of rock towered up five hundred feet, and seemed to meet above and close before us. Into the darkness wound the slight gallery, whose floor trembled with our own footfall, and thrilled continually with the thunderous rush of the pent waters. When we dared to look down, we saw white flashes of foam upon the moving blackness.

We had refused a guide, — they told us there was no need, and we hated guides so, when they could only show what more sublimely showed itself, — and we four women found ourselves penetrating an under world, utterly alone. It was late to go in, and few would choose the time. We met one party of three persons coming out as we entered; and after that, we were in this beating heart of mountain organism, shut with its live awfulness, its initial secret forces, with no other human heart-beat near!

Round the projecting cragpoints where the deep rock-vein bent its course, — across the leaping torrent that hurled itself, madly urgent, along its buried channel, — the little footbridge hung and swayed, and we passed on, the echoes crashing round us and the wild whirl beneath our feet.

Edith was first, like a pure, fearless Una; Emery Ann was next, then I, then Margaret.

Suddenly, Emery Ann sat down, and turned her face and hands against the black, wet rock, and clung there, like a frightened swallow to a wall.

"It's perfectly ridiculous," she sobbed and laughed; "but I can't go a mite farther. It's aw — ful!"

"We won't go, then," said I, stooping to her, and fearing a real hysteric. "We will go back, and come again by daylight. Edith, dear!"

Edith turned.

But then cried Emery Ann, — "I can't go back, neither! I've *got* to see it out!" In her intense feeling, she relapsed into her intensest New England provincialism.

I stood, and quietly waited; only saying after a minute's pause, "We must n't be *too* long, you know!"

"Sure enough," said Emery Ann, rising with calm resolve. "As goods now as any time. But I feel as if I'd got half through dyin'."

She spoke the words quite quietly, and in simple, solemn earnest.

Before us, now, rounded out the "Chapel." An enlarged chamber, almost domed in by the deep-scooped, overleaning wall.

I wondered if it were only a name, or if ever a service had been held here. What a place for a prayer to go up out of, from spirits in prison of sense and sin! How one's very soul would call toward the light!

And to say here, — standing under the mountain, — caught as in its awful, mysterious grasp, — "In His hand are all the corners of the earth; and the strength of the hills is His also!"

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into heaven, — if I descend into the abyss, — Thou art there; Thou art there!"

I had not turned until I reached midway. As these thoughts pressed upon me, hiding me away as in the closet of the world, there to hear speaking itself to me the Name of Him who seeth in secret, and who makes all hush and depth and solitude to fill them with Himself, — for a moment I did not recollect my companions.

Edith and Emery Ann were walking slowly round, to where the passage plunged again into an unknown, chasmy shaft.

I discovered that Margaret had not entered the Chapel.

Could anything have happened? Could she possibly have fallen?

I called to the others to wait a moment, and rushed back.

I found her trembling in the darkness, holding by the rail, looking over into the roaring press of the horrible river. I put my arm round her and called her by name. She sunk down, then, as Emery Ann had done, and clung to me.

"I cannot bear it," she whispered. "The weight of *everything* is upon us, — and *that* is hurrying, tearing on, underneath. It is ploughing down the mountain! I think it is like all the wrong of the world, — and the trouble, — and the judgment!"

Some people would have told her she was nervous, and have hurried her back to the daylight, and tried to make her forget the mountain and the river. I could not. Like Emery Ann, I felt that every syllable she said was true, but that we must see the rest of it. It was too real a word to run cowardly away from, — to leave unfinished.

"There must be more," I said. "It is a great parable, and because I feel a part of it, I am sure of the other part too. I want to find it. There is not any scripture of the world that ends without a gospel."

She grew a little calmer at that. If she had been made to think of her own nerves only, she would not have grown calm. But she still knelt and held fast by my hand.

Suddenly, I heard steps approaching. I looked back, and saw dimly a man's figure moving along the gallery toward the crossing where we were.

"Margaret! get up! there are people coming! I don't know, indeed, if we ought to stay here now." I turned and beckoned to Emery Ann and Edith, who stood now just within the reach of vision in the gloom.

It was a frightful place for frightful, *human* possibilities. I was not afraid of the Lord's Word; but — *why* had we come in without a guide? The darkness; the solitude; robbery; the swift river! I forgot, in my momentary panic, that the river ran out presently into the daylight.

One can dream a long dream in an instant.

The figure came nearer. Margaret had sprung hastily to her feet. My fear touched her; the others had come up. We all stood huddled together in the narrow pass.

"Is there any trouble?" said the voice of a gentleman.

The tone was to my trepidation like the touch of a finger upon a vibrating, ringing glass; hushing it down, instantly.

A dozen steps brought him beside us.

"Thank you, no," I answered, briefly. There was no explanation that we could make to a stranger. "I think we must go back, now. It was only" —

"My dear Miss Strong! Miss Margaret!"

It was not a stranger. It was General Rushleigh.

"Oh, I am so glad!" cried I, feeling a hysterical catch in my own voice at the happy revulsion.

"I guess likely we were all getting into a kind of a scare together," said Emery Ann, with a long breath. "It's a terrible pokerish place!"

"Now we can go," said Margaret, quietly.

"On, or out?" asked General Rushleigh.

"Oh, on! One must see the rest of it. It is too awful a beginning to stop in. One's *thought* of it would never stop."

We turned in our order, as we stood, — Emery Ann, Edith, I; Margaret and General Rushleigh.

I heard Margaret speak, in a low voice, as we went forward through the Chapel.

"It was unendurable, just for a moment. It seemed as if I felt the weight of the world, and the terribleness — of something black, and live, and awful, that rushed under it, and tore it, and would never end. The whole *mountain* is between us and the light of the sky; even between us and the little growing roots of grass!" Her voice trembled again.

"Let me pass, please," I heard General Rushleigh say. "Let me go first, Miss Margaret. Now!"

As he came next me, I turned a little, and saw him take her hand, and lead her gently, like a little child.

"Yes. There is the whole mountain. But the growing grass is there, above; and the pleasant air and light. It is good we can *think* through the mountain when we cannot see. But wait!"

We pressed into a yet intenser gloom.

We threaded a depth in which the cleft edges far above seemed to meet and shut us down, as if stern lips had closed, and we were swallowed.

Still, under our feet, the unseen river rended on.

Yet we did see, faintly. A light stole in, somewhere.

And presently the sound of the deep rushing changed, or blent with a different voice of waters. Of waters leaping in a freer air, and scattering, flashing; the soft, foamy *crush* of a cascade.

We were coming to another open, rounded space. But we not see, we could not guess, till we came into it!

The Heart of the Mountain breathed right up to Heart of Heaven !

A fair, lofty chamber, — a beautiful Well ; walled, indeed, with jagged stone, and its confines reaching up those unscalable five hundred feet. But we never thought how deep down we were, for what there was above us ! Yes, and beside.

At our feet, the rocks lay broken, — piled and grouped, as they lie above ground, — a lovely picturesqueness, — a repose, — instead of a sheer, hopeless depth ; — instead of a chasm, pitilessly cleft beneath, but sealed over our heads, — a chasm cut upward, into heaven. Instead of the horrible Styx torrent, a broadened stream, and praiseful cataracts ; white with parted drops and light let in ; powdery with beautiful mist, that rose and fell like dew ; singing, instead of howling.

A peace ; a gladness ; a smile, a promise, broken down and in. A sweet smell of growing things ; tender little vines and ferns making a green drapery from crevice to crevice, — falling, as the waters fell, lightly over the great rocks ; swinging in the pleasant sky-shine, all the way up those craggy sides.

Arching across, — a lessened firmament, — the bended blue. In it, little clouds floating, pink and golden. As if the tiniest, tenderest flecks hung over here, to be in harmony.

We had lived almost into a midnight in our thoughts, and yet the sunset was not over !

"There is a way up, from anywhere !" said Emery Ann. "Unless," she added, orthodoxly, "from the bottomless pit."

"The way from that may be even *through* ; and the mercy of it, that it *is* bottomless," said General Rushleigh. "Down has to be up, beyond a certain middle."

"Unless you have to hang there, and look both ways," said Emery Ann.

"Until the Sabbath," said General Rushleigh.

I think no one caught the words but me. He spoke them as if to himself. I wondered what he meant.

We stood under that fair light until the flecks of cloud had drunk up the sweet color, and changed slowly into gray ; and the dusk fell in upon the green, growing beauty and the white water-foam.

"Now we *must* go," I said; and once more General Rushleigh passed Margaret, and went first, leading us all. I think he turned and took her hand again, as we reëntered the now thickening shadow. Margaret reached her left hand back for mine, and that made me guess it. Where the path was narrowest, and the roar deepest, I also felt backward for Edith, and she for Emery Ann.

At last we were forth again, into free space and the quiet, dropping nightfall.

How dear and safe is the roominess over the world!

.
 General Rushleigh had come down with his friend toward Martigny, and they had stopped here at the Gorge. He had met Mrs. Regis at Basle, and had escorted her as far as Lausanne, where she now waited us. We had missed a letter somehow; probably it would follow us from Chamounix.

"I should have looked for you at Martigny," he said. "My friend goes on to Chamounix, thence up the valley of the Rhone and down the Vorder Rheinthal to Chur and Ragatz, where I have promised to find him again. After that, we retrace each other's way; he returns northward into Germany, and I go by the Rheinthal and the St. Gotthard Pass into Italy. I have been before to Chamounix, and over the Simplon, but I have never seen the Oberland and the Rhigi. Mine have been very scrappy snatches at Europe. I came over when I was a college boy; that was in winter. Then we came again to bring my sister — Margaret;" he dwelt very gently upon the name, and I wondered if wholly for the sister's sake; — "and my father and I were recalled by the breaking out of the war. Once more I came, and spent two months in France and Northern Italy, when my father's death summoned me back again."

At that mention, he paused.

I remarked, — "Our own plan takes us to Interlachen, and over the Wengern Alp to Lucerne and the Rhigi."

"Yes, Mrs. Regis has made me welcome to join you, if you also will allow?"

I could not tell if it were good or ill, but I could not help

being glad of it, or saying so, friendly. Indeed, how could I have helped the thing itself?

Emery Ann's mind had been upon the successive contingencies that he had spoken of.

"There seems to be a lot, almost, on your coming to Europe," she said to him. "I should think you would be half expecting something to happen."

"I am learning to leave all that," he answered. "Sometimes the thing to happen is, that nothing does."

Had he thought of anything, then, that might happen? Had he given anything up?

"I hope it may be great pleasantness and good, this time," said Margaret, in her clear tone, cordially.

Anybody might have said it; it was a natural courtesy and kindness. She looked up at him very frankly, and there was a shine of warm good-will in her beautiful womanly eyes.

His "Thank you!" sounded like heart-thanks.

We were walking over at this time — the next morning after our meeting — from the hotel toward the zigzag footpath that had allured us from our windows, when we discovered it winding up the steep farther half of the cloven mountain, on the side beyond the Gorge.

General Rushleigh's friend had left early, for the Tête Noire and Chamounix.

We had spoken of the Gorge again, — of visiting it by daylight. General Rushleigh had seen it both by noon and dusk. It had been his sudden impulse to sound it in the shadowy evening time, unprofaned by the curious crowd, that had led him to our meeting there.

But we felt as if that great experience, as it has come to us, could never be repeated. We preferred to keep it sole, and beautiful, and solemn, as it had been.

The September day, upon the valley and the heights, was glorious. This cliff that we were going to climb was golden-edged upon its summit with dead-ripe grass, but broken upon the hither projecting face of it with clumps of shrub and jagged, stony angles, among which the path crept up. Its opposite, as we passed the foot below, was black with perpendicular rock,

and heavy above with evergreens. The morning lay full upon the one; the other waited for the evening.

The two girls sprang up like kids. We elder ones saved our breath, and helped ourselves along slowly with stout alpenstocks.

We met peasant women and boys, laden with brushwood, coming down from turn to turn, as we mounted. The cheerful "Bon jour, madame," — passed from lip to lip between women who had come a quarter of the way around the mid-north parallels to see these hills, and daughters of toil and narrow life who of all the forms and places of the earth would never behold else, — touched me as it was said; one word between human souls meeting for a single instant out of an unknown, unlike past, and parting into an unknown — who can tell how far unlike? — future.

The path led out upon the hither side the crown, which seemed a sharp, sudden ridge. We rested among the low furze and pine, in pleasant recessed nooks, where the dry turf made cushions, or the lichened rocks cropped out and sloped away beneath the soil again, offering at once bench and footstool.

Facing us as we sat, was the dark-crested other half beyond the Gorge, whose rift lay invisible to us among the broken and wooded outlines.

Off at the left, this summit-country which we had climbed to dropped away more gently; and among wild pastures and groups of forest growth, we could see the cottages of herdsmen and mountain folk. There seemed no end of beguiling winding ways among the dips and swells of lofty upland, — around juts of gray, picturesque rock, — and down evergreen glades opening each from each in delicious labyrinths. In the turf beside us grew tiny Alpine blossoms of gold and crimson and purple color; curious, delicate, small ferns; the air was sweet with what the sunshine drew from trees and herbage.

Edith went up toward the outer ridge. A strange, quick exclamation from her, half horror, half some beautiful amaze, interrupted our separate, silent pleasure, and impelled us to our feet and toward her, with we knew not what apprehension or expectancy.

She stood upon the very verge, over which another step

would have sent her down, sheer to the mountain foot. She had not imagined that it ended so; the whole slope was so piled and grouped, with ridgy rock behind rock, leaving little drops and hollows between. But here was the last. Clean depth alone was beyond. Down into the valley, the way we had come in last night. The road wound white, like a thread, upon the greep, and the Rhone lay still, like a dull moat, beyond. Behind Martigny rose a great, gray pyramid, — I think the *Pierre à voir*. Northward, the peaks of the Bernese Alps. The whole outspread of the *intervale* was directly under us, and we looked across through blue air upon the giants' faces.

We exclaimed with wonder; we pressed as close as we dared; we shrieked to each other not to go nearer. I held Edith convulsively by her skirts.

"There may be safer places," said General Rushleigh. "The cliff rounds out, there, at the front, a little lower."

We followed him back to where we had first gained the height.

Over the swell, beside which the path had turned to run parallel with this edge that we had just found out, we discovered a kind of shoulder which thrust forth from the black precipice a turfy slope, ending again a little down, in the plunge of rocky breaks and pitches making the front projection that buttresses the mountain, and walls on that side the dark entrance, — or more strictly, exit, — of the river gorge.

It spread out far enough; if it had been among other gentle slopes and levels, we should have thought it quite a field-space; but knowing what a little run, — an unchecked impluse, — a slip, even, on the dry sward, — upon the windswept height, might bring us to, we came down over the crest upon it cautiously, and with a quiver in our limbs.

Under this edge, the keen wind was partly broken. We were sheltered, where we seated ourselves, at the top of the little plateau, our backs against the rock. The air sifted gently through the low grass; the sun lay warm upon it. Away up there, in the stillness, in the mid-air, it was a real eyrie of peace.

The girls got out their little pressing-books, and sketching-tablets; they laid away bits of fern and blossom to keep to re-

member the day by; they tried to pencil some outlines of what they saw in that grand sky-grouping of hill-tops in their level line of vision, and in the far-down picture of fields and farms and rivers.

"Something to remember by;" scraps of sketch that would be to the real whole of it what the few pressed fronds and blooms were to the whole gay, sweet mountain-side on which they grew.

We talk of "things to remember days by;" it is the days, after all, that we remember the poor things by.

It was such a Sabbath feeling, up there!

It brought back to me General Rushleigh's word of the night before, that I had pondered over and not understood.

As he sat there by me, — the others just below our feet upon the grass-slope, — I could not help asking him.

"Will you tell me what you meant last night, when Emery Ann spoke about the 'pit,' down there? You said, 'until the Sabbath.'"

He smiled. "I should have to make quite a little preach of it," he said.

"I wish you would."

"It is not what I am much given to. Things have preached to me, now and then, within these dozen years; I hardly know if I could deliver again what they have told me."

I just waited and listened. Emery Ann sat on my other side, and I felt her listening too. Edith and Margaret had their heads bent over their tablets, and drew faint graceful curves and breaks and points, just reverently venturing, as it were, to hint at the surpassing lines they saw swept and shot around them into and athwart the blue.

"Some things in my own life, — things in me and that happened to me, — as well as what I learned in such a rush in those tremendous war-years, — brought me to the question that I suppose everybody has to meet; the evil-question. The pit of wrong the world falls into. And I believe the first comfort I got out of it was a strange meaning I seemed to see suddenly in words that have been taken to mean hopelessness. All at once I said to myself, — or somebody said in my in-

ward hearing, — ‘I am glad the pit is bottomless! It can’t hold: men can’t stay fallen!’ ”

I felt the gladness come into my face at that grand thought. I lifted it quickly to his, and perhaps that prompted him to go on. He seemed not anxious to discuss at large what was so real to him; it came slowly. I was so afraid he would stop. He did pause for a moment, though he saw me waiting eagerly.

“Did it ever come to your mind,” he began again, — and while he spoke he stirred and traced the earth in a little rock-hollow beside him with the point of his stick, in a way of mechanical motion people have when what they say is not cut and dried before, but comes to them as they speak, — “did it ever occur to you that Jesus Christ only speaks that word ‘pit,’ — which stands for a continual image of destruction in the old Scripture, — *once* in the course of what makes the New? And that once to say, — ‘If a man have a sheep, and it fall into a pit, will he not lay hold of it and pull it out on the Sabbath-day?’ I quote it not exactly, but with the drift of the two records of it.”

He stopped again. He might converse; he evidently would not preach.

I said, — “I never thought particularly about the ‘pit;’ it was the healing on the Sabbath.”

“Exactly. The healing of the Sabbath, — the Sabbath made for man. It set me to thinking that out. And I found a purpose, I thought, in the Sabbath-cures. They were signs of the covenant, — of which the Sabbath itself was a sign. He put the two together. He never did anything insignificantly.”

He left me to perceive for myself; to speak my perception, if I would.

Letting my eyes fall on something, in that mechanical watching with which he had followed his stick, I found the something was Margaret’s pencil; and that she had turned it point upward, and was pressing it with little gyrations, back and forth idly upon the paper.

“‘A sign between me and you, in all your generations,’ ” I repeated. “Is not that it? I wish I had a Bible here.”

“That is it,” said General Rushleigh. “And this more;

‘that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.’ And ‘sanctify,’ I take it, is ‘*sanify*.’ They stand related like ‘whole’ and ‘holy.’ It is the Redemption Promise. ‘Shall not a man be made every whit whole on the Sabbath-day?’”

“That is beautiful etymology!”

“It is in the words, I think, literally and simply. ‘San-cire,’ — to name, to declare, to establish — sound, sane, inviolable; hence, sacred.”

“But the *keeping* of the Sabbath? The rest?”

“Is not rest, restoring? ‘In returning and rest, ye shall be saved.’”

“Oh, I see!” I cried, gladly. “The two parts of the sign; the Divine, the human. ‘He that hath entered into his rest, hath *ceased from his own works*, as the Lord did from his!’”

“Every seventh day : every seventh year : every seventh time seven, the jubilee of restoration. The *jebel*; the horn of proclamation; ‘He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us.’ It is wonderful how they crowd together, Miss Patience!”

“The *repeated* days,” I said, softly; “the *recurring* years! It is like the seventy times seven of forgiveness.” The crowning Scriptures of it hurried through my thought to my lips. “‘The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;’ ‘for He cometh, He cometh, to judge the earth.’ He never leaves off coming; his days return, and return.”

“We believe it,” said General Rushleigh, “or else we *could* not live in this land of pitfalls. We are sure that there is no depth over which, some time, the Sabbath shall not shine; as that beautiful little heaven shone down into the mountain.”

“His hand is not shortened, that He should not make it come. ‘The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’ It does not matter with which word we start; we come round always to the same gospel.”

I was filled full of joy; I did not want to hear, or say, more; I rested in the gladness silently, as we sat resting in the blessed sunshine.

General Rushleigh rose, and moved a few paces forward.

Margaret turned her face back toward me. The color of it was beautiful. The suffused intenseness of her eyes and the

passion-curve of her lip were a visible overflow of springs touched inwardly. She resumed her first posture quickly, sensitive even of sympathy. At the same moment General Rushleigh turned also, and I saw *his* seeing of her look. I do not know if their eyes met. I think not, by the brief, but certain lingering of his.

“It is like the sea-shore!” said Edith, putting by her sketch-book and pencils. “Only the ocean is air, and we look down into the bed of it. I must try what caves there are under that edge!”

I entreated her not to move rashly. But General Rushleigh, who had been standing, and had seen farther, assured me that one might safely descend over this first brink.

He took Edith by the hand, and plauted his alpenstock firmly in the turf. They went down to what seemed to me the very rim of the precipice. Then I saw him step over, and descend until only his head and shoulders were visible. Edith stooped, sat down upon the sward, gave her hands to him, and disappeared. In a moment he came back to us.

“She has sent for you, Miss Margaret. She has found a wonderful nest.”

“I don’t know why I let them go,” I said to Emery Ann, astonished at myself, as he and Margaret, in turn, dropped down out of our sight.

“I do,” said Emery Ann. “I’d let ’em go with that man into — perdition — forzino! I’d go myself! Because I should know it would n’t be there, if he was!”

When they did not come back for ten minutes, Emery Ann and I also picked up our sticks, joined hands, and walked cautiously down to the edge.

It was, as Edith had said, just like a cranny of a shore. It had been a shore, once, perhaps. Some time or other, great floods, — great ice-streams, may be, had hollowed and ground the cliff into clefts and caves. One descended into another, by huge, overlapping fragments and projections like irregular steps and terraces. In beneath, were sheltered nooks, where one could sit, like a sea-bird, and look straight forth into blue air.

They were not far down. General Rushleigh was standing, and his head rose above the next step of the rock. He heard our voices, and turned, saying, "Do not come farther, until I help you!" And he was about to climb up again. But we begged him not. We said we would stay where we were, and seated ourselves on a nice triangular shelf protected at each side by rising cliff.

Well — there is n't a word more to tell you of it! If you can feel yourself there with us, nested in the mountain-face, you know all that I could go on to say of the hour or thereabouts, that we spent there.

So still it was!

I do not think the others, below, were talking much; though a pleasant tone now and then floated up to our hearing. I just said to Emery Ann, as we settled ourselves snugly, — "Now — we won't interrupt each other!"

"No," replied that straightforward person; "let us hold our tongues!"

I wanted to tell her how that sounded to me; but I would not say another syllable. It made me think, — for the common, rough word was spoken more with the subduedness of "let us hush ourselves," — of the minister in the pulpit saying "Let us pray!"

By and by it was one o'clock. There were letters to write, and we must get something to eat. So we came down the mountain.

"I have had such a happy day!" Margaret said to me that night, as she kissed me at the door of my room. "I think friends are the very riches of life! We can only have just so many blood-relations, — that we are born to, you know; and we can only choose one — person — to — relate ourselves to. But we can be finding friends always. I am so glad I have known you, Miss Patience!"

We had telegraphed early in the morning to Mrs. Regis, at Lausanne, that we would come round by next day's train. She telegraphed back at evening that she would meet us at the station there, and go on to Interlachen.

We were glad not to lose a day.

CHAPTER XXVI.

INCIDENT.

.
We drove to St. Maurice early, in an open carriage, General Rushleigh sitting on the box with the driver. On the same side with the Gorge, we passed at our left the waterfall of the Sallenche, with its lovely white rush out of the heart of the rock, streaming down till its particles thin almost into invisibility before it touches the valley below; a spring of two hundred feet, of the torrent that comes down from the glaciers of the Dent du Midi. You remember the Dent du Midi, that I told you of as we saw it, — the first ice-mountain at all near, — from the terraces at Glion? Now we were winding back around its base toward the point we started from.

The railway, which we took at St. Maurice, crosses the gray Rhone, runs down the valley between its mountain lines, threads deep, beautiful forest glens and gorges, and at last curves around the end of the Lake, bringing us to Chillon, Montreux, Vevay, again.

We looked up at our old home at Glion, — for it really seemed like that, and we like wanderers of years in a mysterious enchanted land, as we found ourselves gliding under the shadow of its mountain, and recognized our own windows in the front of its "pension;" high up on the midway plateau.

In the two or three hours of our journey, I was — beside taking in the pleasure of the way — reading to myself a sort of inward chapter of the little history in which I found myself living.

Not very much happens outside, after all, from point to point of real stories. Book narratives are full of accident. Life is fuller of incident. I do not think we ought to hold the words synonymous. If we do, we want another word, to express the

happenings in. That which comes in — or upon — us, — our very selves, — is more, and more continual, than the things which arrive to us, from without.

We were having no adventures, beyond the beautiful adventure we came for, and dimly anticipated. Nobody had been in peril, or awkwardness, or anyway strangely or excitingly placed, in regard to any other. But within this regularity of circumstance in the midst of all wild possibilities which a professional perception — of tale-writer or tale-reader — would seize upon with an instinct of inevitable "sensations," there was steadily finding its hidden way a life-evolvement more subtle, more truly absorbing in its interest, to the perception that could trace it from its here and there discovery, than any tangle of rapid fiction-movement made by shaking at will the fairy-purse of occurrence.

I put this and that talk together that I had had with Margaret.

I remembered her brief sentence that day at the Royal Academy Exhibition in London, when I had asked her if it would be true *enough* for a man to marry a girl only to keep his promise. And she had answered, with words like shot, — "He might do a meaner thing!"

Those words had haunted my memory, with their impulse of bitterness.

Then had followed her beginning of confidence with me at Dover; when she had said those odd things about Jacob and Rachel; and burst out upon herself suddenly for talking "hatefully;" then her rest in the resolve to do nothing except as she was certain sure of truth; and last, so lately, the showing of her letters to me, and her almost happy hopefulness at Harry's acquiescence, even, that she should "break the crumbs" for him! Her sudden faith in the secret of life and sympathy that she had discovered; that it was not so much people's finding wholly in each other, as finding joyfully together. They would come to things, and to help in understanding them, and they would bring all to one another.

And now, — last evening, — "friends were the best things; the very riches of life!"

What could I have said, when she only followed that with, —
“I am so glad I have known *you*, Miss Patience!”

Truly a friend is the best thing; should it not therefore be the nearest? Ought I not to have said that to her?

No; for it only came to me afterward. I will not take thought for what I should have spoken.

If Harry Mackenzie were waiting for her with a deliberate calculating selfishness, that would be the “meaner thing” that would have made it to be all over with her regard. That was the half glimpse that thrust itself, shadowly, upon her, and made her recoil like some high-spirited, shying creature. Then she looked deeper, she thought, and found his fault to be but the other, boyish careless one, that he did not calculate at all; that he just drifted on, letting life shape itself for him. And she “could not love a boy, always.”

Saying the true thing to him, — giving him her own best large piece of living as it came to her, — she had touched, it seemed to her, though ever so lightly, the spring of a true living in him; and — “Barkis was willin’!”

Ah, dear, unfellowed soothsayer, whose sooth sharpens its finest point with fun, — how far did you see after your own cunning probing, or how far did you reach into life only by that instinct of things which discerning, keenly, one quick thread and following it, cannot run amiss of all its parallels?

So she was letting herself be happy, — fancying herself quite content; perhaps truly growing so, who knows? Holding herself steadfast, and making herself rich, gladly, that she might turn and bestow her riches again. Would there be seven years of this rare compound interest, also, laying up for him? How could his two hands — his boy’s hands — hold it, when it should be all poured in?

Can people put heart and soul at interest so, and not have the bank break, sometimes, as money banks do?

There are women, I know, in whom ordinary, narrowing passion is the last thing that wakes; to whom the first interest in life comes in the vision of its true interest; who are happy — and happy only — if they can grasp its best theory, and assure themselves that they are following its right meanings.

Does passion, therefore, wake in them the more fiercely and fatally if it come late — after obstacle or mistake?

I do not believe it, necessarily; for such an organization will only be satisfied then, with high denial.

It is they who make selfish obstacle, in vain hurry, who wake afterward as they fancy, to their “deeper nature,” which is truly but their deeper selfishness.

Margaret sat quite happy, radiantly content, this morning, between her “friends”; side by side with Edith and General Rushleigh; face to face with me, whom I am sure she loves. Yes, and Emery Ann, also; the plain, good woman commends herself to Margaret’s own strong, original, honest nature; her Yankee-brightness, too, matches pleasantly the young girl’s more cultured quaintness.

Mrs. Regis was on the platform at Lausanne. There was a general, warm greeting. Companion’s faces are good in these lands where human creatures are only “foreigners.”

I had been tracing the hidden thread of one experience; of this other, in the same meanwhile, what was I to know?

The road turned away, upward, from the Lake; climbing the hills, and traversing high table-lands among them toward Bern. We dined there, and waited for the train to Thun.

We were sorry not to stay; it seems dreadful to say that we saw, — at least Emery Ann and I, — really nothing of this lovely old town and the scenery it commands; but we were very tired, and somebody must stay by “the things.”

The others walked out with General Rushleigh, and came back in an aggravation of delight. The old buildings, the arcades, the bears, the Alp-tips — that blaze up in the twilight with the wonderful “Alp-glünen,” — “Why, one could stay here weeks!” cried Edith, telling them over.

“Yes,” said Emery Ann placidly, strapping her shawl, “and then again, one could n’t!”

“We’ll go *into* the Alp-glow,” I said, consolingly.

At Thun, we stepped on board the little steamer that runs down to Spiez, and connects with the train to Interlachen. It rained hard; we had met the fogs on the way; we sat on the

deck in waterproofs, under a dripping awning, and saw the mists surge about us where we knew were the great, invisible "Horns" of many prefixes; where, again, were the peaks of the Eiger and the Mönch, and the solemn whiteness of the Jungfrau. Nothing of all could we discern, though they were all about us; nothing but the darkening water and the rushing vapor and the blind wall of the rain. But we could wait; we were going among them.

We had to descend into the close little cabin, as the evening came on; it was wholly dark when we arrived at Spiez; we followed the line of wet and weary passengers that trailed on shore and into the railway carriages; we found ourselves in a beautiful new car, brilliantly adorned, and with a second story, reached by a spiral stair, where in pleasant weather people may ride in the open air, and look up among the mountains whose dark sides and overhanging forests, deeper-outlined in the murky shadows, we were just conscious of as we rushed along.

General Rushleigh took the nicest, kindest care of us. Having him, we found that we could not have got on without him; one discovers that, by having, in many things. And it is true; it is not the velvet sense that comes of super-comfort; the providing and the necessity arise together. We women had managed splendidly alone; we should have managed, somehow, here; but the managing is, after all, very much the finding things managed. Jack Horner was a great boy; mankind does wonders with terrestrial material; but the plum was in the pudding all the same, or it would n't have come to anybody's thumb. I think I grow more and more meekly conscious, as I live on, that the right thing waits at nearly every turn, and that "getting through the world," which people are apt to speak of as if they had pioneered it, is simply finding the world, — even each one's particular sphere of circumstance, — abundantly well laid out and engineered already. There is no wilderness without its blaze and trail.

"What *should* we have done, if it had not been for this or that?" we say. I cannot parse that sentence to save my life; but I suppose it means, "if this or that had not been *for it*." And they always are.

We went to the Hotel Jungfrau.

Crowds of people again, a great, magnificent caravanseraï; brilliant table d'hôte; long bills of fare, and delicate courses. A whole street of the like public houses; shops; gay promenades; a green valley-basin made into a gay square with park walks, on which face villas and pensions; dress, show, watering-place gossip, idleness, and the rest, just as at Saratoga or anywhere else where people have spoiled things; the pure, distant Jungfrau looking in with a pale scorn, beckoning motionlessly. This was Interlachen.

We had to spend the Sunday there. And we were glad to get away on Monday morning.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MISTS; AND SIGNS.

.
 Two carriages again. Mrs. Regis, Margaret, General Rushleigh, in one; Emery Ann, Edith, and I, in the other.

An uncertain morning, lovely in uncertainty, like that in which we went up the Flégère from Chamounix.

The velvet green of near hills, the sombre richness of ever-green heights, the smile and shine of brook and meadow, the flush of orchards, all brilliant with the wet of undried rains and the flashing struggle of coming sunlight, — these made up the picture-scene into which we went forth rejoicing toward the valley of “nothing but springs.”

A great cliff, just like a giant tower, stands at its opening. Battlements, turrets, broken masonry, are all outlined as if shaped by human hands and then softened by ages of beautiful decay. Tender vines sway from its crevices, and creep about its summits. It glooms with a great shadow over the far-down roadway. You wind under its foot, and pass in, as by some unspoken countersign, to the sweet depths beyond.

There, green Alps rise up, whose mighty slopes stretch high on either hand as you go, with shelf after shelf of soft, bright pasture, swell beyond swell of tenderest, most glowing verdancy, until crowns of forest meet the clouds. Hamlets sprinkled over their terraces — herds feeding on their vast bosoms — innumerable water-courses springing out of their clefts and falling down down, down, — meeting and mingling, — dripping, glittering, shattering in mist; here an outbreak of rock, there a piece of felled woodland, with huge trunks lying like Titan jackstraws, among which stand the woodmen's cottages; a whole world of wild, delicious life and surrounding, leaned up on edge, as it were for you to see the whole of!

Again, you find yourself between unbroken splendors of green and silver, where the whole mountains are brilliant with vivid, soft color, like velvet heaped sumptuously in its own heavy folds, between which drop the water-loops and fringes, as if the great Queen Nature sat somewhere upon her throne, below which you could only look up at the robe of her, gathered royal-rich about her, and ribboned with white-streaming cataracts.

"I wish it would n't come into my head," said Emery Ann, just as I was not quite thinking, but feeling out, this likeness.

I put the indispensable monosyllable of question: "What?"

"The thing it looks like. A woman's gown, hunched up fashionable, and trimmed and sashed. It's ridiculous!"

"Why not think the other looks like this? As even foolishness has to look like something real, and nothing with a grace in it is ever done *first* in millinery?"

"They never came *here* to get it, though," said Emery Ann, morosely.

"They did n't know where they got it. But it was somewhere, or the fancy of it never would have come into their designs. Can't you feel more patience with the fashions, finding there's a real idea behind them?"

"No, they've no business to spoil with a nonsense, they don't know what. It's graven images." And Emery Ann sat back into her corner and shut her eyes.

Not for long, though. Having entered her protest, and abstracted herself from the displeasing suggestion of that which had profaned it beforehand, she came back into the irresistible beauty, and gazed up into the heart of it, with a half rapt, half determined look upon her face, as if she had cast Satan behind her, and would keep him there, by sheer straining into the angelic vision.

I would not interrupt her then; but I told her of it afterward.

"I presume likely I did," she answered. "You can choke down the hiccups, and get your regular breath again; and you can stop thinking, and go off into a heavenly sleep. You can put anything out of your mind, that you *have* a mind to,—and let the other thing come in!"

"Oh, look there!" cried Edith. "There is the Dust-Brook, that comes down a thousand feet!

It was away forward, at the right. We were just turning from the road. It was a flash from the mountain face, — a down-pour of white-light, — a shimmer into fine sparkles, — a melting into nothing, hundreds of feet before it reached the ground. It never did reach it, altogether. It floated away, everywhere, upon the air. The invisible drops of it were upon our own faces. It was the Staubbach.

At the same moment, we had all turned in at the little inn-yard of the hostelry that takes its name.

Here was where we should get horses and guides to go over the Wengern Alp.

We sat in the baptism of the far, unpalpable spray, and looked at the lovely torrent, while the men got the beasts and saddles ready.

I don't know, now, why we all took to the saddle without a question ; perhaps because we perceived no hint or indication of other mode ; perhaps we took for granted that the Wengern Alp could only be done on horseback ; or Emery Ann and I were fired by some inexplicable youthful ardor, which impelled us this day to do as others did. I do not know, even, if we could have had chairs if we had wished for them. All I do know is that we found ourselves lifted up into the roomy railed seats which we fancied would be like chairs on horseback ; never calculating that the very roominess, — as roominess is sometimes, when one cannot keep an exact point of balance in the midst of whatever margin, — might be rather a snare and a distress than a well-being ; and that while our chief guide and General Rushleigh carefully looked to girths and stirrups, we settled our skirts and picked up our bridles without a word, and were presently moving after the others with that strange feeling which the unaccustomed rider has, of being mounted on an earthquake, that might topple one off with the next heave, or part its wave in the middle and swallow one down.

We descended behind the village, into the low ravine among the little watermills and the barns, and emerged upon the ragged hillside where begins the path across the vast mountain.

Mrs. Regis looked almost like a girl this morning, in her

purple-dark dress, neat-fitting her perfect figure, her little traveling hat with its line of white crimped border under the brim, and its plain folded bands of heavy silk knotted at the back and falling into one broad loop and end, — her color fresh with pleasure and the mountain air, and a kind of smile-break lightening her face, such as ordinarily lights a woman's face but one short, early time of her life, before it fulfills its half foretelling in a declared sunshine, or fades beneath the dropping over of the grayness that is to be her sober day.

She rode first along the narrow way, which could only be traversed singly, — the chief guide leading her horse; then came General Rushleigh, then Margaret, Emery Ann, Edith and I. Three men walked beside us, one of whom held my bridle, as being last, and the other two were near the other horses' heads, ready with a hand as it might be wanted.

We came to the ascent that realizes the first great height above the valley.

I do not know how Emery Ann felt in this beginning of our progress; but I know the awful misgivings that thrilled my own mind, and by them I could understand what happened shortly afterward to her.

I should never keep on the saddle, — I was drifting helplessly about in it, and was as likely to drift off as any way; the saddle would never keep on the horse, — I thought I felt it twisting and slipping as the creature strained and scrambled up the broken track; the horse himself would never keep on the path along those dizzy verges!

A terrible riot got possession of my nerves; could I endure this all day? Could I endure it another minute? What was that corner out there the end of?

We found ourselves creeping along a brink toward a sharp turn whose angle seemed to project sheer into space. Mrs. Regis's horse passed it, and went — I could not see, nor argue where.

Would there be more of this? Would there be worse?

I was ready to shriek out; to say it was too frightful, too impossible for me; but how could I turn back the whole party? And if I did, what then?

While I struggled and suffered, Emery Ann did it.

"I don't care! I can't! It don't signify!" she cried, suddenly, and dropped her bridle, clinging to the saddle-rail in pure panic.

Her horse stopped. One of the men took the bridle, but the others before her stopped also, to see what was the matter, and to soothe her. Edith's horse, checked so suddenly in his trained following, backed a step. My man sprang forward and seized him.

There was space enough for me, for I was some paces behind, and I suppose I was safe; but if our little party had been Pharaoh's host, floundering suddenly in the Red Sea, I should not have felt that doom any nearer than my excited fancy felt this. If a horse jogging innocently out of an inn-yard, is a live earthquake, what do four horses seem like, haunch above head, on a steep mountain path, all halted and huddled, and stepping bewilderedly together in narrow perilous space?

And there was peril, though I was, for the moment, just outside of it.

The guides shouted in French, to hold the path; to let the horses follow; they had not the custom to be turned! For, actually, Margaret and General Rushleigh were trying to come back to us!

"We will give it up," I heard Margaret say, gently, "if you are frightened."

And at that instant something crumbled, rolled; there was a Swiss execration; a man and horse scrambling together; a second of time in which I hardly knew what happened.

I saw the hind hoofs of her horse just grasping the very edge; I heard one word from General Rushleigh, — "Margaret!" And then the guide had dragged the animal forward, angrily *ordering* General Rushleigh to proceed; and, silenced by the real horror, helpless in the environment of danger, we gave ourselves up to what must be, and were led around the cragged point, — the Rubicon of our undertaking.

Up above, we found ourselves within ramparts, as it were; the path receding from the edge, and bolstered on either hand by irregular knaps and bosses of the mountain, among which we *felt sheltered* and comforted.

Mrs. Regis was waiting, wondering. Her guide had turned to come to us ; but our whole panic and its hazard had been the thing of scarcely more than a moment, and he did not reach the turn before we appeared.

Emery Ann said not a word. She was horribly pained and ashamed at what she had done ; and until we came out upon something like an open moorland space, nobody ventured to infringe upon the order of our marshaling, or to check the movement of our little file.

But, as we wound away, over what seemed a great globe-surface of the upheaved mass, almost level in its largeness, and there was room for breasting or grouping, General Rushleigh dropped back beside Emery Ann.

"Don't speak to me, General," I heard her say. "I can't make up my mind yet, to speak to myself."

"My dear Miss Tudor! Do you think a soldier does n't know what a scare is?"

Emery Ann looked up at him. "I thought it was just exactly his business *not* to know," she said.

"On the contrary, it is his very first business to get a scare, and his second to stand it. You have done both ; you have fairly entered on your campaign."

"And a pretty one it might have been !" was all she vouchsafed of relenting to herself.

"That was *our* business. We were the leaders. We ought to have known better."

"Um !" said Emery Ann.

"Is that saddle comfortable?" inquired he. "Is the horse tolerably easy?"

"I suppose so," said Emery Ann. "But then I'm like the old woman in the railroad collision who thought that was the way the cars always stopped. I presume there are saddles and horses in the world that are easier. But this is the one I've got to go on. I can put up with *that*."

He looked doubtful. But he saw that she had regained an equilibrium of confidence, and he knew that all other depended upon that. He would not disturb it. He began talking with her of the wonder and beauty of the view, — which I just recollect, *Rose*, I am not giving you at all.

We were climbing up into what we had seen from below. We were among those grand folds and convolutions of the mountain shape, and leaving beneath us, — lovely in the far depth and the wide, including vision, — the valley and the little river, the village, the upper hamlets, the rich green pastures, the waterfalls, the clearings and the lumber heaps; and above us, in broken glimpses, — for the mists were still hanging more or less heavily among them, — we were coming upon the bare, uplifted majesties of the changeless peaks.

Away, away down, across the Lauterbrunnen, hung the little silver thread of the Staubbach against the cliff.

Just above us was the spread of the Alp-mass we traversed, broken in great waves of turfy ground or lichened rock; having, when the dropping vapors shut away the encircling summits, its own hemisphere and horizon like a separate world. I keep repeating this. I shall say it again presently. Nothing else gives any word or image of meaning for these Alpine heights and breadths and solitudes.

We rode through a pleasant fir-wood. General Rushleigh was by Mrs. Regis, now. He had not spoken to Margaret more than half a dozen words, — of kind, courteous inquiry, — since he uttered that one irrepressible exclamation of her unprefaced name. He did not apologize for that, or allude to it in any way. It was perfect gentlemanly breeding in him; the excuse was patent of itself; to offer another would be the liberty. But I wondered if that were all.

I don't suppose I know much about a man's nature; but perhaps what a woman would feel in a man's — a gentle man's — place, is not far from it.

I think, if I had been General Rushleigh, and had said the name of a girl that way, and the girl was Margaret Regis, — I should have found out something of myself in the saying it, or directly after, when I came to think. I should have found myself face to face with a thought of her in my secret mind, which took no preface or ceremony; and if my unconventionalism disturbed me for a moment as a thing to be accounted for or pardoned, it would only be to reveal to me by the unwarrant, how strangely sweet the warrant might be. And the fine tact of my

silence would have been the fine counterpart of my uttered impulse.

But, then, I was not General Rushleigh; and he may have been thinking of no such thing.

I fancied in all his intercourse now, with Margaret, he remembered — to his restraint or his protection — the half showing he had had of her position; he did not let himself regard her as quite free to his approach. This threw him, now that our party was reunited, a good deal with her mother.

Or, did I take cause for consequence? Was it the friendship and attraction of Mrs. Regis, after all, into whose circle, merely, Margaret came, and as her child, had come to be "Margaret" in his thought?

Things have to be very plain to me, before I can cease to see two possible aspects of them; and the more one look is the look I might rejoice in, the more the other thrusts itself, like some distorted vraisemblance, upon my recognition.

Margaret had the demeanor, to-day, of what I can only call a beautiful virgin content.

There was a soft glow that had come in eyes and face, after that dangerous moment, and the involuntary expression of General Rushleigh's solicitude that it called forth; there was a gentle silence mating his, and asking no word of him to take back or explain a word that wanted, neither, anything different or more to follow. Not even that itself should ever be repeated.

A girl lingers so much longer than a man in the lovely gates of friendship, before she finds to what wonderful temple they open. And if Margaret thought this was friendship, and that other love, no wonder at the pure exultation with which she had said, that "friends were best of all." No wonder she counted them for the joint riches of Harry's life and hers that was to be lived together.

Only, she did not know, — and who could tell her? that that life once begun, it would bind her to its own track, from which all other certain companionship must fall loose, or drift and speed away on its different line and groove; that a woman who has a husband will find, if she is a nobly honest wife, that she

cannot have any other man-friend of year out and year in; there can be for her, thenceforth, only one having and holding. The rest, though they be companionships of the kingdom of heaven, must stand apart, — must pass and not linger, — till the kingdom of heaven shall come.

We followed the bridle-path, which seemed also a kind of pasture track, up and along the immense upreaching bluffs and downs; the fine vapor lay around us, a little way off always, except at our right, where rose the Jungfrau, to us invisible. Here it seemed gathered in the great abyss between us and the mountain, and to creep close against our path, rolled over upon the lesser Alp as the tide surges upon a rock. Behind the mystery of it, we heard the voice of the avalanches, — a dull, thunderous roar, uttering its arcana in the unseen.

I shall never know now how the Jungfrau would have looked, face to face, in her unclouded queenliness. But I shall always know what I felt near me. — nearer, doubtless, than my eyes would have made it, — behind that throbbing, swaying curtain of gray mist.

People have said to me since, when I have told them that we crossed the Wengern Alp and never saw the Jungfrau: "Oh, what a horrible disappointment! What an irreparable loss!" I did not feel it quite like a disappointment. It seemed to me that I was profoundly conscious of that tremendous vicinity, and should have been so if I had not been told of it; as one is conscious, in the dark, of a human presence, or knows by some fine, unlistened sound, some untraced difference of air-pulsations, the nearness of a large body to the touch.

It was the feeling of the worlds again. As if one could stand on the palpable convex of the globe, and see another huge convex float over against it with a mere blue crevasse of space between. This was what I half imagined I should behold if that veil had lifted; but the white apparition might have drawn itself back into a different, remoter attitude, and defined itself clearly into just a very grand and lofty ice mountain, with glittering peaks and spreading base, planted upon the same earth I stood on, and rising up into the one small sky.

"I would not give up what I can think about it," I said to

General Rushleigh, when he spoke his regret to me, for our sakes who had endured so much to get here, — “I would not give the feeling of it up, — just over there, — hark!” — A great avalanche boomed into the silence. — “For any seeing that would place and limit it.”

“And yet — if that fog would only break a little — for one moment!” said Margaret.

“Yes. That is what we all say,” I answered her.

Only those gentle, shifting vapors, that *might* break any moment! Only that little space, across which we could feel the Something, — real vast, close! And from behind the cloud that brooded between us, touching both, those deep thrills of sound, felt more than heard, as when an organ trembles in a church.

I never thought of being disappointed. I only waited, for what I knew was there.

We turned at right angles upon the culminating ridge of the Little, or Wengern-Scheideck, as we rode up to the small building called the Hotel Bellevue.

Still we had the gulf and the Presence on our right. We seemed to go out upon a spur, or around a bend, and to face from it along the length of the ravine. I can only say “seemed,” — it was all a gazing against mist, and a placing in one’s fancy. But as we left the little platform and went in, to dinner, the mists were turning golden; brightening and thinning into something that just made light tangible.

We were upon a sharp crest, whose line commanded the two descents. The little windows of the inn dining-room opened on the one side over the valley of the Grindelwald, on the other against the Jungfrau, with her two peaks in the heavens and the glaciers in her lap.

We found an English gentleman here, who had been staying, he told General Rushleigh, nearly three weeks.

“You can see nothing,” he said, “in nine times out of ten, by just coming up and over. Perhaps at the sunset to-night, every peak will be lighted up in it. And the breaking away in a fine morning is something to wait a month for. I come here and wait; the Jungfrau is not to be compelled.”

Another confirmation of what I am hourly more convinced

of; that a summer tour of Europe, — or even of any little bit of it, — is just like reading a grand book by chapter headings.

Mrs. Regis and General Rushleigh walked out together from the dinner-table, to reconnoitre. We did give a thought to the possibility of staying till the morning; but even the Englishman could promise us nothing in any *one* twelve or twenty-four hours; his creed was a long, reverent patience, and a sure, though slow rewarding.

We had not weeks to give — to take the boon of rather; we could ill afford any fruitless delay and exposure; it might be wet for days, the very hotel-keeper allowed. So, though we recognized admiringly the loyalty of our chance friend's faith and purpose, and contrasted his wise abiding, "still, in one place," with our own uncertain flitting after the fashion of the crowd, — and though the girls were restlessly eager at the notion of the adventure of the night here, — we felt our final decision all the while in the background of our thoughts, and that it must be here as it had been at the Flégère; we must take such gift as came to us in the apportioning of days, even as we do in our days upon the earth.

Emery Ann put that into the shape of words.

"It may be very fair weather in the world by Nineteen Hundred; but it won't be our time. We're here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow folks. It's a comfort, though, that to-morrow we can't help being *somewhere*, too!"

"Yes," said Margaret; "we shall have other mountains to-morrow. We shall have the Great Scheideck; but — it was just this once in all our lives for the Jungfrau!"

A shout came to our ears from the outside.

"The Silberhorn! The Silberhorn!"

General Rushleigh looked in at the door, and summoned us hastily.

We were out on the little plateau in an instant; to see that golden mist shimmering, floating, stretching, — all but rending; and between two clouds or folds of it, something white in clear sunlight, far, far up in the sky; an outline, as the new moon outlines herself; only this was of a point, a luminous apex, from which dropped, to lose themselves in vapor, the side-slopes of its silver-shadowy cone.

It was a mere tip, — a pinnacle ; but by the glory on it we could guess, could measure — so much !

" I am satisfied," said Emery Ann, slowly. " I know it 's all there, now."

General Rushleigh and Mrs. Regis were side by side in front of me, upon the rocky ledge. Something is surely making in Mrs. Regis's nature which had waited long. As she lifted her face to that vision in the heavens, there was a beauty of awe in it, — a speech of soul-delight, — the characters of which I had never seen it wear before ; it grew quite radiantly young in the new expression.

" It is like a white flame," I heard her say. " Like the tongues of light on the foreheads of Fra Angelico's angels."

" It shines out like a miracle-sign," said General Rushleigh ; " as the Cross shone out to Constantine."

She did not answer ; neither did she move, visibly ; and yet she stood, or leaned, just a shade closer beside him. It was as if her spirit moved to his. Her face, still uplifted, held its quiet rapture ; her highest self shining in it as that highest peak of the Jungfrau gleamed, pure-radiant, overhead ; glorious with being shone upon.

Her spirit, all unconscious, made its miracle-sign — that perhaps all souls make some time — to me. After this, I could not slight her, ever so little, any more, in my mind. After this, whatever, in the little story that is living beside me I might wish made utterly beautiful, as I could think it possible to be, for others, I could never help remembering also the beauty that might be for her. If not the thing that draws her, may she yet be drawn to possess that which is behind the drawing, — whose unknown fulfilling is the divine gravitation to which she really moves !

General Rushleigh's eyes dropped for an instant toward her from their upward looking. It was to say something, I thought ; but the sign in her face stopped him. It held his eyes in a glance that magnetized her own to meet it.

They may never look like that, again, to each other, in all their lives ; they may never come so near each other. But will Mrs. Regis think of that ?

She was back in herself again ; I could see the earth-consciousness shut swiftly over the spirit's self-forgetting.

At the same moment, the faint, white mist fell like an eyelid over the glory that had looked upon us from above. The Silberhorn had vanished.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SCHRECKHORN.

.
. . . . WE mounted our horses, and began to come down over the steep crest.

Mrs. Regis's face was now the face of a beautiful woman, with a flash of glad triumph in it. She looked royally happy, as she sat easily erect upon her saddle, her horse following the steep bends with dropped head and careful, tentative steps, his shoulders rising and his crupper crouching, as he held back in the pitchy, broken way, and reached his forefeet down alternately as if he were descending stairs. She had not a thought of fear. Had anything supreme cast it out?

She led us all, and gave us all confidence. Emery Ann had vibrated almost to the extreme of daring, from the opposite point of panic-fright; she had got started next, by some chance, and General Rushleigh came behind her. I was last, and could see each one of the party as they successively turned the irregular angles, except as they dropped for a moment from sight in the abrupt declivities.

It was a great, rocky waste; torn into gullies by rushing rains, — by streams from the tempest-torrents that broke upon the cloudy ridge, and parted there to find their separate ways to the green valleys of Lauterbrunnen and the Grindelwald. The sun was already lowering behind the mists, and our daylight would be short enough.

Suddenly a cry from a guide, repeated by the others, —
"The Eiger! The Eiger!"

The vapor had grown so thin that it hardly seemed to veil anything; it cheated us into absolute unconsciousness of the great shapes about us. Unlike the rolling surges behind which

we had felt the awfulness of the Jungfrau, it had resolved itself to a mere apparent dimness of far atmosphere. We might fancy that we looked distantly enough, but that there was nothing in the distance; when all at once, out from the pale gray blank, a grand, mighty *shoulder*, white-robed and shining, leaned right over us!

Its sweep was as if it ran into the outlines of an invisible outstretched arm; it was defined above an infinite pure breast that melted softly away into the unseen. Like the illumined tip of the Silberhorn, it projected itself forth as from a spirit-realm into the sphere of a material vision; a part-showing of that which might never all be shown.

It was a prayer-glimpse: it was what shines and leans above the soul in the great Secret Place, when she dares not look up, but feels herself creep close under the Arm and to the Heart of the Allfather!

That was the first. Other great lines lit up with shimmering flashes, as lightning shows the edges of mountainous cloud. Other white brows parted the dimness. We saw the clear, rounded summit of the Mönch, intensely brilliant with its sun-drawn edge. To all these wonders we gazed up, quite away from earth, toward which their phantoms faded.

They were gone again, and we could not say that any curtain had closed between; there was only the soft impalpable gray that hindered a blank sky from being blue. Out of space, and into space again, they shone forth and receded.

Would the positive, outright whole have been better to us than these transfigured glimpses? I felt blissfully content with the thing given. By the lesser that is manifest, the eternal and invisible is understood; even so in the creation is made clear the very power and Godhead.

We had to dismount after a time. It is the custom always in the most precipitous part. They had not told us of it, and we were ill able, some of us, for the additional fatigue.

We had to walk or plunge down gully after gully, over brink after brink; the mud, too, was nearly ankle-deep in places; and the leaps we were forced to make from point to point over the miry ground, — the long *drops* that could not be restrained to

steps, and that jarred us painfully, — were a penance of pilgrimage that Emery Ann and I would hardly have dared if we had counted on. But we had each a careful guide to help us along; two men led the horses; General Rushleigh, as was quite natural and proper, assisted Mrs. Regis; and Edith and Margaret took merry care of themselves and each other.

We came down into the pasture edges, among herds of cattle that we had some fear of at first in passing, as they looked at us with intent, strange eyes; we struck at last a firmer, evener slope, and found the way narrowing to a fenced path, where only one could pass at a time. A little farther down, in this, the horses waited.

And it was here that the crown of the day's joy and wonder came to me.

Our guides hastened on before us now, to be ready for our mounting; the two girls were far ahead; Emery Ann trudged stolidly forward, never once turning her head, — which I doubt, now, if she had power to waste in doing; she was like a soldier worn out and sleeping on his march.

I fell behind, and quite out of sight, as the descent and breaks grew steeper. I was very tired; I felt, at last, that I must stop and sit still, for at least a single moment. A flat stone beside the path, and a tree-trunk to lean against, invited me; and once down, it seemed as if I could never resolve to rise again.

I was all alone. No one else visible; for the path itself was a deep gully, and the turns and falls in it shut us quickly away from each other.

Over head was the rosiness and the deep blue of a fair sunset; lower in my limited horizon were the illumined, gauzy mists; the tinkle of herd-bells came down from the heights; the singing voices of children, stationed by the path to wincentimes from travelers, floated up from below and indicated the advance of our little party. In the pleasure of the momentary solitude and rest, I thought of nothing else.

And then it came, in its divine, unutterable splendor. In the western sky, — only you must not think of "western" as we at home look away toward low sunsets, — in that misty west quarter underneath the central blue, stood up a great cone.

A mere crag of rock, you think; or even of snow, flushed rosy, as the Alps do flush, in wonderful twilights?

A mountain, Rose, — a perfect, towering pyramid, — of living, flaming, palpitating coals!

Every outline sharp in light, — a light within itself; transparent with clear burning.

A mountain whose base was in the clouds, whose head reared up almost to midmost sky. The one thing revealed, out of the beautiful chaos of struggling light and vapor.

The great outlines of the Mattenberg sloped away beside it in blazing curves, as those of the Eiger had done in pure silver brightness. But this one solid peak, — if it were solid, being like a translucent crystal of unmingled fire, — made itself real, complete, in every literal line, and yet transfigured with that supernal glory.

I forgot everything else. I sat and gazed, not knowing whether I breathed. Did Moses see more than that, in Horeb or on Sinai?

My guide came back to me. They were frightened for me, and had sent him to see what had become of me. I believe it was what he said. "They know not what it is that has arrived to you, madame."

"That!" I answered, pointing up.

"Ah, yes!" he said. "The Schreckhorn."

I suppose to him the Schreckhorn was always there.

We could hardly sit up on our saddles, Emery Ann and I, when they lifted us to our horses again. I saw her lie forward against the saddle rail and almost upon the animal's neck, as we paced cautiously down to the bridge and across the stream, among the old mills and into the long street of the village, in the deep, still shadows that settled swiftly upon the valley. Nobody spoke a word, even to ask, "Did you see?" We were thoroughly exhausted.

We came into a dark nook, beneath the mountain; we passed under the trees of a shady garden entrance, and rode up to the door of a hotel.

Somehow, we got inside, and found ourselves ushered into a big salon, with bedrooms opening from it at either hand.

We said, — "Water. Beds. Four teas simple, — here. As soon as possible."

And until all was done and brought, we fell into speechless heaps upon sofas.

That night, I think we slept like death.

Twelve hours were a mortal blank.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EDELWEISS.

. . . . **WE** came to life out of deep trance.

"Emery Ann!" I called, across the room.

And Emery Ann, from the other little bed, held up her right forefinger, and said, "Present!"

"We will go back into our beloved chaises à porteurs, to-day."

"Will we? Then I believe I'll conclude to be alive. I had n't but about half made up my mind."

"But the men and the horses?" she said, as we were dressing. "They were hired to go through to — what's its name — was n't they?"

"To Meyringen; yes. But we'll send back two men and two horses, and pay their return, if we must. We might as well do that, as wait here."

General Rushleigh settled it; and I do not think we were much cheated, — as to money, at least. That is the good of a man; what he can't help, a woman is reconciled to; but she never knows exactly when to be reconciled to herself.

Edith and Margaret were fresh again. They were both used to horseback, and had n't the fearful stiffness that we suffered. What kept Mrs. Regis fresh I don't know; but she, and her clean-brushed traveling dress, and her white collar and cuffs, and her little cap-rim around her glossy hair, came forth altogether new and bright as the day. Her days seem to be over and over again, as the sun's are; not one after the other, adding up anything, or taking anything away. Morning is morning; spring is spring; nobody knows how old the earth is. Here and there is a woman just like that.

After we got started, we found it out. That poor Emery Ann had had a yanking old horse, and a wretchedly uncomfortable saddle, all day yesterday; and the wonder was that she had stayed on at all, or had come off with undislocated vertebræ. She had borne it all those hours, as some poor souls bear life, witless that there is anything better in the world, or that they might have had it, if there were.

"Well; as long as I've got through, it's all the same to-day," she said, after she had entered paradise, in the shape of her mountain-chair, and was settling herself serenely in it. "Better, finally. If there's anything to my credit, let it go to balance the muss I made, starting. It *did* seem as if things would n't keep together."

The men had taken back the two best horses; Margaret had now the one that Emery Ann had ridden, and Edith mine. There was no help for it. General Rushleigh blamed himself that it had happened.

"I don't mind it in the least," said Margaret. "I can always manage. But it's no wonder poor Miss Tudor got dismayed."

She put a folded shawl between herself and the saddle-rail, and declared that it was quite comfortable. "And one can always get off and walk, you know."

"Or change saddles," said General Rushleigh, passing to her side. "I think my horse is easier."

But that Margaret would not allow. She thanked him, shook her head, and moved forward, as if for fear he should persist.

The riders went on over the side hill, while our porters took us round by the low path at the river-margin, and among the mills. It was fifteen or twenty minutes before we all met again, at a little cottage where they had milk and beer to sell, and whence the path, turning an abrupt corner, wound away into the mountain.

The Great Scheideck is another huge ridge, lying between the two valleys, of the Grindelwald and Meyringen, as the Wengern Alp stretches between Lanterbrunnen and the Grindelwald. All the morning we should climb the one side, at noon dine upon the summit, and all the afternoon descend upon the other.

The great glacier, that comes down from between the Wellhorn and the Wetterhorn, reaches the valley, over against the base of the Great Scheideck. We came opposite to it in about an hour, before our path began to make more directly for the summit; and our porters took us down into the ravine to see the wonderful clear ice-mass, and the blue cavern that has been cut deep into it.

The riders alighted at the mountain-châlet station, and accompanied us on foot. We all crossed the little plankway, and climbed along the slippery glacier edge, and entered the crystal tunnel, which runs far in, a winding gallery, under the huge superincumbence of solid water — or *air*, — one hardly knows which to fancy it, — so azure, so translucent it looks, as far as vision can pierce it, and then so shuts against the sight with the very blank of its clearness.

Emery Ann and I would not go far; we paused a little way within the entrance, took in the thought of it, and felt it, like the gallery of the Trient, too dreadful-beautiful to follow into its heart. We went back and sat in the sun, that shining full down upon the frozen torrent, neither melts nor changes it; only keeps a gentle rain falling from its face, where it stops, almost like a Red-Sea wall, against the warmth of the valley.

I wish, Rose, I could write like Charles Reade, and put in sentences of three lines each the visions and sensations of our day. For I feel that I *cannot* give you every day and all day long.

We climbed up over huge fells, and moors, and crags, into higher, stiller atmospheres, till at the sharp ridge we stood again upon the crest-line of two mighty slopes.

Around us were the solemn tops of the Wetterhorn, the Schreckhorn, the Eiger, — parting the clouds and looking down at us.

We saw people eating dinners at the summit station where we rested; but we changed our minds about our own, and waited to get them at Rosenlauri, about three hours farther below upon the other side.

Our little cortège trailed picturesquely down among the rocks and pastures, — now over the bare bleakness, and again along

moss-turf and ferny patch, winding in and out as the path threaded the rugged breaks and pitches toward a pine forest that closed in around the mountain foot, and wrapped the valley in green pleasantness. From the bareness and the cloudy solitude, we came upon wood-sweetness, the works and tracks of men, the bright rush of a clear river, little rustic bridges by which we crossed and recrossed the rambling stream, some falls and sawmills, and then to the hotel and baths of Rosenlani.

Before we got there, rain was falling. The clouds had dropped after us, first upon the mountain ridge, and then, softly breaking their edges into gradual rain, came pattering into the leaves and moss about us, and plashing into the river. It was so pretty to be out in the rain, when the rain itself was out in the lovely wildness! We didn't mind it in our waterproofs; we were only a little chilly, and glad to get to the blaze of a good fire which they gave us at the inn while the dinner was made ready.

But what the rain was making ready, for us, we did not dream as we ate our dinner!

There was here a room full of exquisite and elaborate wood carvings; rich brackets, and mantel fittings, clocks, mirror frames, chairs, easels, vases; baskets and stands for vines and ferneries; everything conceivable in loveliest forms and groupings of flowers, foliage, animals. Mrs. Regis was enchanted, and spent some hundreds of dollars for things to be packed and sent direct to New York. I bought a tiny fernery, and a little easel wreathed with Madonna lilies, for motherdie's picture. These I carried in my lap, all the way after, to Lucerne.

Then we went forth again, into the dropping and lifting mists, that still swept up and down the deep valley, as if they had tumbled in and would fain get out if they only knew the way.

"It would clear off if it could," said Emery Ann; "but how does it *ever* clear off out of here, without being turned upside down?"

"That is why it will have to wait till to-morrow," said Edith, laughing. "Till the world is the other side up."

Two peasant boys came springing down the mountain-side upon the path, as we crossed the bridge again to the right bank - the Reichenbach.

"Edelweiss! Edelweiss!" they shouted, holding up the blossoms in their hands.

"Edelweiss!" called the guides to the porters, and the porters to us. It was a thing to stop for; a thing that nobody would dream of passing by. The men set down our chairs, as a matter of course.

The boys made straight for the one gentleman of the party. General Rushleigh bought the Edelweiss.

I thought he would give it to Mrs. Regis; I thought he would have to; she was near him, and had been near him all the morning. But General Rushleigh is not a man who *has* to do anything, I find.

There were two flowers; he held them an instant, while something like a wish and a question seemed, to my sight, to pass through the expression of his face. Mrs. Regis had moved a little onward,—just her horse's length, perhaps. Edith and Margaret were behind him. He reined his horse across the path, turned slightly in his saddle, and reached his right hand back.

"Will you have the 'Noble-White,' Miss Margaret?" he said, with the slightest perceptible emphasis linking the pronoun and the blossom name.

He had not spoken *her* name before, since he called her "Margaret," upon the precipice of the Wengern Alp.

Then he gave the second flower to Edith.

They belonged, naturally enough, to the two young maidens. But I am sure he translated the word for Margaret.

He rode forward, and kept next to Mrs. Regis.

Sometimes a man shows much by that which he does not do.

Afterward, one day, it happened when we were together that I saw Margaret's Edelweiss between the leaves of her Prayer Book; just beneath the Epistle for that next September Sunday.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

A delicate pencil-line was drawn under two words: "peace,"—and "wholly."

CHAPTER XXX.

RIVER-PLUNGE; AND CLOUD-SEA.

.
Do you remember how we used to describe rivers, in our geography lessons, at school? "Rises in the Carpathian Mountains, flows southeast and east, and empties into the Black Sea?" As if a river ever did empty.

It is the best way I can think of to describe to you the Reichenbach Valley, — that beautiful, deep, but high-lying groove among these Alpine tops, through which we made pilgrimage in the golden rain.

It begins against the breast of the Great Scheideck that slopes toward the north and east; it runs thitherward, and empties, over a mighty brink, — it is the valley which *does* empty, and it is the Reichenbach which is poured out, in a glory we are coming to, — into the lovely lower vale of Meyringen that stretches across right-angularly.

We saw it empty. The river, whose pathway it is, — and more. That which also it held and was brimful of, up to the tips of the great mountain-horns, that wet, sweet afternoon.

Crossing the stream upon a level, — its shining ripples close beneath and beside our feet, — we found ourselves presently following the face of a high cliff again, midway to its crest; the swift water tumbling far below us, the way we went; and over opposite the other wall of its wild channel-aisle, a thousand feet high. Touching the sky, if the sky were blue; losing itself in gray vapors, now.

A straight escarpment, glowing with green; vines and ferns spilling themselves luxuriant all adown it; over tapestries of moss nourished in the river-moistures. Above and below, rich forests.

Along the gradual incline of the long path our porters swung us easily, with rhythmical motion; the fine-distilling rain stirred all the fragrances of the wilderness; that tapestried wall, among whose draperies and fringes countless little water-threads and white, tiny, foam-bursts, tossed forth and trickled down, rested our eyes half-tired with limitless wonders, in its near, delicate beauty; and behind us a southwest wind was driving the mists, all unrealized by us, from off the mountain faces.

The rain and the mist grew golden; the sunlight was making a hand-to-hand contest with it; so that particle to particle, the two mingled in glistening confusion, and under it the woods and herbage were a citrine-green.

All at once, pure light flashed; blue broke; we turned our heads, and saw that up from the south the pinnacles were reared again into upper radiance; the Wellhorn and the Wetterhorn leaned out of the zenith, and the great range from which they spring closed up the sky behind us. Before us poured and rolled the scattered clouds, driven the valley length, to be tumbled over the lower mountains. We, in clear weather, followed the misty stream and cataract.

It shone at first with simple, warm effulgence, from the pursuing sunshine; then, as it fell into the farther east, and a yet more blazing triumph chased it, sending quick shafts of life-fire after the beautiful rout, it broke into rainbow blooms. Down there, perhaps, in the level, people saw the perfect arch against the hanging drops; we saw the tossing fragments, — here green, there gold; now violet, now crimson; melting, blending, shifting, changing; a great basin full of splendor, — the making of a thousand rainbows. Between the grand, still, overhanging ramparts out from whose fastnesses we and the showers had come together, and that lovely rolling and heaping beyond and below, we moved in a beauteous mystery; we felt ourselves taken into a rapturous secret, behind the unlifted curtains of cause.

By the time we reached the brink, the under valley was clear. It lay stretched in the evening glow, exquisitely beautiful with its green fields, its villages, its farther wooded hills and over-crowning amphitheatre of snows.

We had come down, at the last, a most precipitous incline;

a smooth-paved causeway over which the horses could be only led, and we had also alighted for a little distance from our chairs. Then we had turned to the left upon a level brow, beyond whose edge, at our very feet, lay the distant, exquisite panorama. And here we first comers awaited the rest. For when the descent began, and the riders dismounted, our sturdy porters had borne us ahead.

We went round, all together, into the little hut, so built upon the hanging point of crag as to monopolize the sight of that other wondrous "emptying," — the plunge into the profound ravine of the rushing Reichenbach.

From the little platform and back window of the hut, you look over a narrow gulf that separates the spur of rock it stands on from the mountain. Out from that mountain hurls itself, — no, leaps upward, — an impetuous mass of thundering waters.

It has come all the way down, with gathering impetus, from those enormous far-off heights; it has buried itself at last in the very rock; you look in through the winding chambers that it has ploughed, and see it fling itself hither, thither, down their successive hollow descents, searching for final outlet, churning itself to foam, and making at each bound a fresh roar of everlasting reverberation.

It seizes its ultimate freedom with a madly jubilant spring; shot upward with a vast recoil, it vaults into the air, bends itself with a grand poise into its parabola of conscious doom, and delivers itself to its splendid destruction in swift, white helplessness, scattered as it goes, into myriad and myriad sparkles of ever sundering atoms.

And "that way" the Reichenbach comes down into the Hasli-thal, and finds the Aare.

We took our way, down the steep, rapid zigzags, into the valley full of rosy light. We looked back, ever, as we went, upon that white river-leap among the darkening pines.

In the broad road beneath, I made my porters stop for Mr. Regis to ride alongside my chair.

"We are deadly weary," I told her, — "Emery Ann and I I am sure you riders will be. Must we stay days here at Meyringen, or will you push on to the Lake? At Brienz,

there will be easy excursions up and down the water, — to Giessbach, — to Interlachen if you like. You strong ones will want something to do. I feel as if we might need almost a week of rest; and that where we stop to-night, there we shall stay."

Mrs. Regis assented. She certainly did not want a week at Meyringen; and the possibilities of Brienz and the Lake which I suggested struck her pleasantly. She rode on, to communicate our ideas to General Rushleigh, and Emery Ann's chair came alongside mine. I told her what I had proposed, and the arguments. She summed them up; much, I thought, as if she had taken in the words at tired ears, and had to gather up the sounds again with a determined effort to make sense.

"The Lake — and the steamer — and the — falls, is it? That — *other* — bach? And something for the rest to be doing, — and — we shall be at the beginning of the next bout, shan't we?" she concluded, more alertly.

"The Brünig, — yes."

"Well, it's all right, I presume." And she drooped again.

We sat still on our chairs, therefore, and Mrs. Regis and Margaret enthroned themselves upon the luggage, when we brought up at the inn door in the little street of Meyringen; and we would not budge, nor understand a word, though all the hotel people poured out around us to seize us and our belongings in.

General Rushleigh paid off the guides and porters, and opened the negotiation for further conveyance.

Of course it was "impossible, — all to fact, — until the morning." There were no voitures for Brienz to-night.

"Very well," the General remarked to us, in French, "Rest you, here. I go to seek elsewhere."

"But no, sir! Wait a moment, sir! If it is that Monsieur has the inevitable necessity, it must be that one should do his possible to serve him. Wait, wait, if you please! But will not the ladies mount?"

No: we would not mount. We would sit just where we were. We were altogether too tired to go up-stairs. And the result was, in less than fifteen minutes, two closed voitures, —

violent hands laid on bags and wraps,—corners and boxes piled with shawls, baskets, valises,—four porters standing at the two doors for their fees,—and we put in promiscuously in the darkness.

It happened for the first time that the families were broken, and that there was no order in our march.

Edith and Margaret had gone to the rescue of the impedimenta, to see at least that the right things went in, and left some space for us to come. Then, somehow, Edith got Emery Ann in upon a forward seat, while Mrs. Regis was waiting for a glass of water, and to find the centimes to pay the waiter-tax upon it. General Rushleigh put me into one carriage and her into the other, last of all; and then it turned out that it was Margaret and I who were together, and had the remaining seat for him with us.

Of course, Mrs. Regis was not so rude or silly as to object or change. The doors were slammed upon us, the whips cracked, and we were off upon the nine-mile river road, under the black shadows of the moonless night and the mountain-mass of the Brienzer-Grat lifting its ridges along upon our right. I should have skipped this drive but for the circumstance.

Margaret had made me take the back seat of which one end was occupied with shawls, against which she insisted I should lean. In fact, I fell back among them almost helpless to do otherwise.

General Rushleigh placed himself beside her, forward. It was no manœuvre of mine, nor hers; but I took the satisfaction of it as one can only take a satisfaction when things happen to one's mind without plan or accountableness.

"I do hope mamma is comfortable!" said Margaret. "We were all rushed off so!"

"Edith is doubtless hoping the same thing for me," I answered, "having just done your work as you have hers."

I suppose I ought to have kept resolutely awake, for the matronizing: but I found myself deliciously dozing, and deliciously rousing to doze again, half a dozen times in the next half hour. I think I came to semi-consciousness whenever they began to talk a little; but there were long silent pauses, unless my sleep was completer than I supposed.

"Are you very tired, Miss Margaret?" I heard General Rushleigh say, after one of these intervals.

"No, indeed. I fancy the 'tired' doesn't come till the wonder and the beauty have faded down a little. I have been *looking* at it all. It is all there, like the spectrum of some dazzling thing. — Why does n't anybody ever *tell* you about Switzerland?"

"Perhaps for a little of the same reason that those raised from the dead did not tell what they had seen."

"But they *speak* of it. They will say, — 'Oh, you must be sure and go over the Wengern Alp. You must see the Reichenbach.' I do not know that I could begin at all; but it does not seem to me that I could stop with that if I did begin.' And yet who will ever believe me if I tell them that I came down into a sea of rainbows, and that there was a glory of a waterfall that fell *up*? Or that the mountains looked over at me from the middle of the sky?"

"They might not all see it just the same, if they were here. Beauty like Wisdom" —

"Is only justified of her own children," I said; for he hesitated to finish it. He was so very scrupulous of what he said to Margaret.

"There were two women grinding at the same mill, you know," he said, availing himself of me; and I knew by his tone that he was smiling. "Think of some of those we saw at Interlachen. They have been grinding here and there, all summer at it. I suppose they will go home and say that Switzerland is 'fascinating.'"

He said the word with the very accent of a woman who empties her imagination, and ends the subject, with it.

We both laughed.

"But I wish I knew what I did see," said Margaret, simply. "And why it made me feel so. *You* know, Miss Patience; you always do. What *were* those clouds, all poured down there under our feet?"

"I shall find out, perhaps," said I. "This and that come together, sooner, or later, if we keep 'looking,' as you say. But I am sure General Rushleigh knows. Ask him."

"Do you?" and Margaret's sweet voice turned itself in the darkness, so that I knew her face turned.

"I think it was a 'sea of troubles,'" said Paul Rushleigh.

I hate to be forever calling him "General," but I suppose I must — generally.

"Dropped away — and turned beautiful. The bright side, — the *upper* side. You did know. I could only guess, you see," Margaret added, quietly.

"I have lived long enough for some things to have drifted down," he answered.

"Yes; some things," Margaret repeated. "And when they have all drifted down" —

"It may be like that. Only it is hard to imagine, when there is a new fog around one."

"I wonder," I said, "if that sea of human troubles — swept away — may not have been the very rainbow John saw, round the throne?"

"The tears that were wiped from all eyes," said Margaret, — quickly, before she remembered herself in speaking. After she had said it, she sat very quiet.

I wondered at General Rushleigh, then. He also was quiet for a moment, but directly he said, quite in his ordinary way: —

"I suppose they will make two hours of this carriage drive. It is very dark." And he leaned toward the window, trying to discover some outline of things in the gloom.

That shut down something between our thoughts, that had begun to quicken mutually, as the darkness shut our faces from each other's sight. We each turned in upon ourselves, and sat there, close together, but in a sudden separateness. There was no more talk for a good while.

I could not bear it very well. I felt as if Margaret had been almost pushed aside. Left, at least, alone and chilled, by his withdrawal. For it was plain to instinctive perception, — so keen, I knew, in her, — that he held back from the nearness to which such *conversing* — such real turning together — tended. I wondered, was he afraid? It was like his calling her "Margaret" and then not speaking to her, hardly any more that day. And her some slight question a few minutes afterward, and

she answered me with the "tire" in her voice that had not come before. The joy and beauty were "fading down a little."

General Rushleigh noticed that. "You *are* exhausted," he said. "Have you anything to lean your head upon? Are your feet comfortable? Let me put this rug in your corner."

And he had to reach his arms around her, to place the soft wrap, loosely folded and strapped, so that she could make a pillow of it.

"Now, could n't you both sleep a little?"

Margaret said only "Thank you," but there was almost a quiver in the syllables. He leaned back in his own corner, and we fell utterly silent.

"It would have rested me so much more, if he would only have gone on talking," Margaret said to me afterward, with her simple, touching frankness. "He is very kind, but I can see he does not want much of me. He is very different with mamma. I thought he was going to be my friend," she ended, sadly.

We stayed five days at Brienz, which time Emery Ann and I passed almost wholly in our own rooms. Indeed, I was fairly ill with weariness; and the poor fare they gave us made an end of my appetite. If it had not been for the grapes the others brought us when they came in from their daily excursions, I think we should both have broken down with a settled sickness.

It was one afternoon when they had all come back from a sail, that Margaret and I were alone a while, and she said to me what I have just put down.

"He always does something to make me comfortable, and then goes away, or hushes me up, as he did that night, coming from Meyringen."

That was the way she had come round to it; having told me some little thing that had occurred that afternoon; his changing his seat in the boat, and putting Edith next her, so that they both might have the shade of Edith's parasol.

"I always forget mine, you know; and I did n't mind the sun a bit. How can I help thinking he wants to get away from me?"

"He is a very unselfish person, I think," was my reply to

the innocent complaint that told me so much in which a woman understands a girl beyond her own perception of herself. "He saw how very tired you were that night, — how tired we both were."

And then she answered me as I have told you. "I thought he was going to be my friend."

"I am very sure he is your friend," I said.

"Is this all it is, then, to be a friend?" she asked. "I thought it would be more. It is more with me and you, Miss Patience. It is more with him and mamma. No; I begin to be sure he will not have me for a friend."

"He cannot help it. What you, — what people, — are to each other, they will be, whatever interrupts."

"It may be something to come," said Margaret. "But it is not come yet. I suppose it is I who have not come to it. I fancy, sometimes, that perhaps he may think I am not amiable with mamma. But I can't affect, — or even make a point of things, — to get friendship, any more than to get money. I want to *belong* to such people, Miss Patience," she said earnestly; "even if I have to live all my life away from them."

"That was all that even the Lord promised to John and James; to drink of his cup, and be baptized with the same baptism," I said to her. To be set beside Him, — on his right hand and his left, — was something to be given as it pleased the Father. We shall all come to what is really for us; we shall find the fellowship; we shall be satisfied; when we awake, and see the whole; as it is, and as it has been making."

What else could I tell her, — though I believed it might be, — even ought to be, — very near her, — that avowed, beautiful belonging? It was not come yet, as she had said. She only knew she had no wine. What if it were commanded first that the jars should be filled with water? It was as if the voice said to me, longing for her: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" I could only tell her, as Mary told the servants: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

CHAPTER XXXI.

OVER THE BRÜNIG: THE LAKE: RHIGI.

.
We went over the lovely Brünig Pass, up from the valley of Meyringen; looking back upon it once more at our feet, and looking over from the new heights we gained to those we had traversed to come into it; catching a last glimpse of the last down-dropping of the Reichenbach; then, through sweet woods upon the northern slope, we descended to the other lake-side; the fairest lake, I think, in all Switzerland,—Lucerne.

It was one more day of sunlight and deliciousness; a day of heaven upon the heavenly hills.

At Alpnach we took the boat, and steamed down through chamber after chamber of enchantment, whose floors were the still, clear water depths, whose winding walls were the encircling mountains, whose divisions the green promontories seeming almost to shut themselves across before us, and then, through beautiful doorways gradually revealed, widening out to new, magnificent curves and spaces, where Pilatus and the Rhigi and the perpendicular forests of the Bergenstock hemmed us grandly in. Overhead, that firmament of one's special own, which is had only in this close surrounding of great heights.

But we had not got away from those other skies, — even into the separate shelter of this sweet, still water-world. There yet looked into it from over the rough shoulders of Pilatus, the far, white peaks of the Eiger, the Mönch, the Schreckhorn, the Jungfrau, — out of their supreme heaven.

Margaret kept closely with me. She was proud and sensitive about putting herself in General Rushleigh's way, since she had taken that notion that he did not want much of her. She could not be with her mother without being with him; General Rush-

leigh certainly quite devoted himself to Mrs. Regis; and it had gradually come about that Mrs. Regis and I had almost changed girls, — as children change dolls for a while, — Edith was such a pet with her, and Margaret turned so much to me.

We had exchanged them as traveling companions, coming over the Brünig. Edith had gone in the carriage with Mrs. Regis and the General, and Margaret had been with us. It was Margaret's doing, I think. Edith suits Mrs. Regis, too, artistically. There is a childish grace about her that complements itself to a lighter, younger matronage than Margaret's grave, independent ways and noble, womanly air can do. Also, there is not the inevitable reminder of "mamma." All these little things fit in, like cogs, and move the wheels; the way some deeper power, I suppose, is set to make them go.

We had to proceed to Lucerne, although we had resolved not to stop there now. General Rushleigh was obliged to be at Ragatz by the middle of the coming week, and we wanted him to go up the Rhigi with us. Besides, as Mrs. Regis said, after the Rhigi must come another rest, and Lucerne would just do for us then.

I, too, had my own dear little "beside," which I did not tell to anybody. It was Saturday; and Sunday would be mother-die's day, — the fifteenth of September.

On the first, — my day and hers, — we had had that gift of glory on the Montanvert. Between, — you know how we used to make holiday of the between, that is since such holy day, — has been all this joy and uplifting of the mountains; now if I could climb up to the top of Rhigi for the dear fifteenth, would it not be like a Mount Pisgah to me? Should I not be very near, — almost to reach up and in?

When I am with other people, who have not known, I keep it all in my heart. I could not tell them; not even Margaret; unless when it is over. I do not suppose Edith remembers it at all. At home, I have your mother and Mrs. Shreve, who understand. They just come quietly in in the morning, and bring me flowers; Mrs. Shreve always has the pure, sweet tuberoses for me then; and then they leave me, because they know I am not alone.

But here, — I could not have explained, to make anything happen! And yet, see how it all did happen. These things are how I know it is not all left to myself.

We were too late for the boat that goes up from Lucerne to Vitznau — at the Rhigi-foot — in time for the train up the mountain. We had to wait an hour or two, and take the last boat, and so sleep at Vitznau. Early in the Sunday morning there would be a car for that dizzy railway climb.

You must look on your map, — as I hope you have been doing all along, — to remind yourself clearly just what a lovely, winding, inlet-y lake this is, that creeps away north, east, west, south, into depths and hearts of Alpine wildness and beauty, sheltering and hiding itself away in the shadowy embraces of enormous mountains that stand in its very waters and shape it in on every side.

You look up and down alternate dreamlike vistas, on your left and on your right; you sweep out into a broad, central sea; you sail again into a narrowing glade at whose farther end the cliffs seem rounded to an absolute closing curve; and when at last, in the falling gloom, in which the twinkling shore lights glimmer out from village clusters beneath the impending forest masses, like swarms of fireflies alighted in the dense black leafage, you come quite up against the boundary, — lo! a little magic looplet opens in the very hills, and through it the boat shoots into another still, shadowy, mountain-girdled sea!

Only we stopped just short of doing that. Vitznau lies just in the hither bend.

We had seen the white puff of the locomotive from far down the lake, as it floated slowly up the long incline, and hung among the fir-trees away above the little town, on the huge flank of Rhigi. We had only to eat some broiled chickens, drink our tea or new milk, and go thankfully to bed in the clean pretty chambers they gave us at Hotel Pfyffer, looking down through a garden of trees to the other lighted houses of the shore, and upon the moveless shadow of the sleeping lake.

Should you like to get into a car that sits tilted up on the track at an angle of twenty-five or thirty degrees, — in which the passengers are all seated backward, the lines of faces making a pleasant human slope as you look up ; whose locomotive, placed behind, has its boiler, shaft, and chimney pitched at a sharp forward incline, so that it may be relatively upright as it ascends, — its fifth wheel, contrary to all proverbial sarcasm, being the soul and safety of the whole concern, clutching with resolute little cogs at a middle ratched rail, and clawing its way slowly, by main force, up the long, frightful steep, with its tunnel cut for eighty yards through the perpendicular rock, and its viaduct crossing high in air from crest to crest above the deep, wild gorge beyond ?

Should you like to ride in that car an hour and a quarter, feeling the tug and strain with which those little iron teeth are holding on for your and everybody's dear life beneath, while you look forth and over to see the lake and valley drop, drop, as they drop beneath the eagle's flight, and the great snow circle of the Alps, the dazzling crown of the continent, rise slowly in the horizon, point after point ?

Yes, you would like it, after the first thrill. You would forget that you were anything ; that it would be of any consequence whether you should drop or not. Not that there would be no care ; quite otherwise. In the great Might around you everywhere, it is so plain you could not fall out of care. I think that is the hidden secret of the excited impulse people say they have, to fling themselves forth into great space and depth. That was one very way the tempter came to the Son of Man. And by so much deeper were all his temptations than our own, that He always faced the subtle heart of them. It is a mere insanity that most times seizes us. The inmost mystery of a truth — but a truth unlawful to lay hold of — lifted itself to beckon Him. The nearer we seem to get to that shape of an angel of light that appears to stand in the centre of the circle whose circumference of interdiction is drawn for our first protection, the more deadly and interior we may know our sin.

CHAPTER XXXII.

NOONTIDE AND MORNING UPON RHIGI.

.
It was up on Rhigi that a thing happened to me that very often happens to people in story-books; and that gave me occasion to put in practice a ready-made theory which never seems to have occurred to any of the inventive persons who deal in high-minded fiction, and who make their best characters altogether helplessly mean in consequence.

It is not often that ready-made emergency-theories come to practice. The emergency is so apt to vary from the programme, or even never to come at all. I have had my plans all laid for fire and burglars, all my life long, and have never got a chance to test my patents.

But my patent against involuntary eavesdropping came to triumphant proof on Rhigi.

We escaped eagerly from the train when it landed us below the Kulm, under the deep embankment behind the hotel.

The Rhigi mounts up, in the midst of the sea of wavelike peaks it looks abroad on, like a huge curling crest, ready to break on the western side, where it overhangs the lake-valley. The long sweep upward is its eastern back, over which the bold little wheel and ratchet ply their perilous way. Eastward from the slope, below the crown, you gaze off upon billows of Alps; around thence toward the north, they stretch also; westward and northwestwardly, when you have gained the dizzy apex, you look into a gulf,—how beautiful the gulf is cannot be said in the same word,—into a gulf over which this foremost breaker of a solid flood seems to have reared itself and hung arrested.

You stand as on the lip of the vast tide, and look down and away through the far, low stretch; you see Pilatus ending the

"Do you?" and Margaret's sweet voice turned itself in the darkness, so that I knew her face turned.

"I think it was a 'sea of troubles,'" said Paul Rushleigh.

I hate to be forever calling him "General," but I suppose I must — generally.

"Dropped away — and turned beautiful. The bright side, — the *upper* side. You did know. I could only guess, you see," Margaret added, quietly.

"I have lived long enough for some things to have drifted down," he answered.

"Yes; some things," Margaret repeated. "And when they have all drifted down" —

"It may be like that. Only it is hard to 'imagine, when there is a new fog around one."

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That shut down something between our thoughts, that had begun to quicken mutually, as the darkness shut our faces from each other's sight. We each turned in upon ourselves, and sat there, close together, but in a sudden separateness. There was no more talk for a good while.

I could not bear it very well. I felt as if Margaret had been almost pushed aside. Left, at least, alone and chilled, by his withdrawal. For it was plain to instinctive perception, — so keen, I knew, in her, — that he held back from the nearness to which such *conversing* — such real turning together — tended. I wondered, was he afraid? It was like his calling her "Margaret," and then not speaking to her, hardly any more that day.

I asked her some slight question a few minutes afterward, and

she answered me with the "tire" in her voice that had not come before. The joy and beauty were "fading down a little."

General Rushleigh noticed that. "You *are* exhausted," he said. "Have you anything to lean your head upon? Are your feet comfortable? Let me put this rug in your corner."

And he had to reach his arms around her, to place the soft wrap, loosely folded and strapped, so that she could make a pillow of it.

"Now, could n't you both sleep a little?"

Margaret said only "Thank you," but there was almost a quiver in the syllables. He leaned back in his own corner, and we fell utterly silent.

"It would have rested me so much more, if he would only have gone on talking," Margaret said to me afterward, with her simple, touching frankness. "He is very kind, but I can see he does not want much of me. He is very different with mamma. I thought he was going to be my friend," she ended, sadly.

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"I always forget mine, you know; and I did n't mind the sun a bit. How can I help thinking he wants to get away from me?"

"He is a very unselfish person, I think," was my reply to

this journey has been to me, — what your friendship has been. Some time, — when some things that I ought to be sure of have grown clearer to me, — I may try — may venture” —

“I am your friend. You may tell me anything,” said Mrs. Regis, when he paused so absolutely.

It had not taken long for these sentences to be spoken. They just gave me time to think; they mixed themselves up with my thought; — “This will not do. — Must I stand up, where they can see me? Should I go up, and meet them?” Yes, — and stop all this that they were saying, and that then might never be said.

Besides, I wanted my beautiful solitude a little while longer, and presently they would go away and leave it to me.

Then my brilliant idea came back to me.

I just did the thing that all the people who ever got caught behind curtains in deep windows, or on balconies within from which were rooms with speakers in them who did not guess they were overheard, or any where else where they listened perforce to what they had no business to hear, might have done as well and simply as not — if my patent had only been out.

And now, it is out.

I just sat still, and put the ends of my two little fingers tight into my ears.

It answered admirably. I don’t know, and I never shall know, what those two people went on to say, or whether they went any farther at all. I knew it was not meant for me, — not even by the ordering of things, which I believe in. Because of those two little fingers, which were ordered also. Ordered to fit exactly into the little galleries of sound, that have no gates across them.

I speculated about that, while I sat so, with my elbows on my knees. It would not do that we should be able to make our own quiet too easily; we should shut out disturbance, and despoil ourselves of safeguard. But for conscientious emergencies, how exquisitely those finger-tips are measured!

The inward hearing was not let nor hindered, though. I believe, — I know, now, — that I perceived more of General Rushleigh’s meaning than his companion did, whatever more

he spoke to her. I knew if this man did not mean to speak, — if he did not think it right to tell out fully what he hinted at, — no sweet friendliness would beguile him into it. I did not think he told her any further; but there might have been more words of personal confidence and regard, — more half expressions that she linked entirely with these, and so took wholly to herself, where I by no means believed they all belonged. He liked her so very much, and so safely; and she, — well, a woman cannot always be made friendship to.

She had shown herself very lovely to him. Yes, and she is very lovely. Only, somehow, it is the concentrated loveliness you look at, — the loveliness that all circumstance ministers to and that ends in itself, — rather than the forth-going beauty that so enwraps you with its gracious giving that you half forget to admire at all. It was something planetary that beamed about her; she was an evening star in the western glow. There are those who shine as suns in the kingdom of all radiances; who seem to cover their personality all up in the blessed blinding of an effluent light.

But to him, she may have been forthgoing. If Margaret had not been by, I should not have wondered if those eight years or more between them had all melted away out of both their memories and beliefs.

I dare say Mrs. Regis would have thought me as mistaken as I thought she was. She would have said, or felt, — “What can you know? You, merely looking on?” If she had come to me with every syllable that General Rushleigh said to her that morning, — with all that he had ever said, or looked, or seemed, — I could not have interpreted it to her.

I — looking on — had observed many times that *hovering* expression in Paul Rushleigh’s face, and manner, and voice, when he was beside Mrs. Regis; as if something came to the very edge of utterance and lingered there; as if something that was the very spring and spell of his friendship waited, almost transparently, for a fit time and way to come fully forth. And then that new youth and blossoming of her nature lightened in her face to answer it.

It was going to be hard for her, whatever way it ended. Un-

less — but I would not think *that* could come, now that he had even dreamed — a dream that he must crush — of this.

They were gone away when I took my fingers from my ears again ; and other persons had come into their place upon the cliff.

There were voices, — a man's and a young woman's, — talking rapidly in French. Perhaps by their approach they had checked and interrupted the other conversation.

When I had climbed up again, which I began to do instantly, hearing the new steps and tones drawing nearer down the zig-zag, — (I passed at the turn an elderly man with a bright-faced companion who waited for my slow steps with a slight triumph in her younger politeness, and who said something in her own language like — “It is not yet arrived to me as that, my friend !”) — When I had climbed up again, I was going to say, I saw General Rushleigh and Mrs. Regis quite over at the southern brow, where the little observatory platform is. Edith and Margaret and Emery Ann were coming up from the front, and moving toward them. When Margaret saw me, she left the others quickly, and joined me.

There was room for everybody. We stood at separate points, and watched what was coming.

A white sea of curling mist, drifting slowly between the southward mountains and our own, leaving here and there an island summit afar off, as it settled below us to the valley, but slowly whirling, gathering, climbing, toward this side, and upward again, to our feet.

Clear blue was above us still, — the sun was shining gorgeously, and the vapory mass was splendid-pure with upper glory ; a vast, soft, level-tossing, downy-white cloud-bed, that fitted and filled, with its swelling, all that great basin as it swept across.

Huge, rounded billows of it began to roll against our height ; they came toward us as the surf comes ; there was only a little point of Rhigi left above the beautiful flood.

And then it surged wet against our faces ; it poured above us and thickened into gray : we were drowned in it, and the sunlight was put out. Its fine moisture changed to drops that fell

upon us ; there was nothing about us but a little circle of rough rock and pasture grass,—mere yard-room round the dreary hotel building. We were out in a pouring rain, and must go in.

A table d'hôte dinner with a crowd of people ; a driving storm outside ; a scudding transit after eating and drinking were over, to our lodgings in the dépendance ; an early going to bed, in the faint hope that it would be clear by day-break ; the wind hurling itself madly against the building, of which we occupied the southeast windy corner ; the sleet beginning to hiss and spit against the windows. This was our sunset upon Rhigi.

Well,—we had had the beautiful noontime ; and we had seen how the storm comes, as Emery Ann remarked, “when it comes upside down.”

We were to be called at four,—if there were a sunrise. Emery Ann said she was “reconciled either way.” We got out extra candles, and set them up on their ends without candlesticks ; we made ourselves cheerful for a while with their light, and with thinking, by their suggestion, what if the hotel should take fire and burn us out into the tempest ? We hoped everybody would be careful, and we pinched out our wicks conscientiously, tucked ourselves up under all our blankets and water-proofs, and forgot that we were trembling in a great wind on a stormy peak five thousand feet above the sea.

There were no horns blown, or bells rung, at sunrise ; the sleet still fumed and spattered at the panes ; we became semi-conscious, and resigned ourselves again to oblivion. It was seven when we arose, and found that the storm had ceased, and a bright sun, that had risen behind it, was shining.

“Well,” said Emery Ann ; “there’s no hurry now ; it’s all over.”

But General Rushleigh knocked at our door.

“There is something better than the sunrise,” said he ; and we made haste to go and see it.

Mrs. Regis had a headache. I dare say she had not slept much. She said she would be out soon, however. Margaret was dressed, and joined us as we came from our rooms.

When we walked round the end of the house toward the

morning quarter, and General Rushleigh who was standing there heard our voices and turned to come and meet us, I hardly noticed even him at the first moment, in the heaven-wide marvel I found myself surrounded with. Much less did I observe how it was that Margaret had left my side and gone to stand by herself on the high bluff northward.

General Rushleigh did not undertake to show, or to tell us; he did not speak at all of it, as a common person would have done. He gave me his arm, — I suppose, for I found myself standing at the edge and holding by it, — and walked forward with me, face to face with that from which the duu curtain of the tempest had rolled clear away.

Yesterday we had seen the great distant summits, here and there, that wear perpetual royalty of snow; between, and hitherward, had been the wide, tumultuous heaving of lesser hills, covered with rich forest glooms, or bare with storm-worn, sun-bleached faces of bleak gray; now, wide around us, the mountains, like Atlantic waves when the gale has blown, all had their gleaming crests on. The great circuit — of fifty miles radius — was a pure, dazzling chain of sharply characterized white cones, on which the new day poured illimitable glory.

"It was not for nothing!" ejaculated Emery Ann, after the first few moments' silence.

"We have got better than we came for," I said to General Rushleigh.

As I turned my face toward him, I saw that his was turned aside. I followed his look, and it led me to Margaret. She was beyond us, at the left, standing upon a point whence she could see both ways, — across the Goldau Valley, and forth over this white environment of the Alp-Ocean.

The wind swept freshly past her; her dress blew back from her figure; she had dropped her clasped hands before her, and her eyes looked off steadfastly into the sublime distance, their moveless lids beautiful with seeing; from beneath their awed level, her glance streamed straight eastward; the bright light was full upon her forehead.

She had hastily twisted her hair in one great loose knot, and caught it with a single pin; this had slidden from its hold, and

the wind had uncoiled the long, rich veil of it, and floated it back upon her shoulders. Her little hat, with its single curling feather, rested upon it and held it from further disorder, while it crowned, as it were, her attitude, superb in grace, and sweet with reverence.

General Rushleigh became conscious that I watched her too.

"She is a picture in herself," he said to me. "The reflex of it all is in her face, — her aspect."

"Yes. But she would come straight out of it if she imagined we were looking."

"I know she would," he returned. "I never met a person who more thoroughly shunned all mere effect."

"I am so glad you see that," I answered. "She even does herself injustice by it, oftentimes."

"I have seen that, too," he replied.

"I was sure that you could look beyond. But I think — she has somehow got a fancy — that you are turned aside from her in your liking — your friendliness," I blurted forth, half involuntarily.

"Miss Patience!" he exclaimed, and he moved suddenly away with me upon his arm, — cannot *you* see beyond? Cannot you understand, — with your wisdom — your conscientiousness? — I am thrown very intimately with her. A man — a young girl — in the midst of whatever pleasantness, one cannot be too careful to be *true*!"

With all his truth, he certainly did manage to be enigmatical.

What was he so conscientious about? Was it Margaret's lies, or Margaret's self?

I could not ask him that. But I felt myself blush, as Margaret might have done; for the instant, womanly fear lest he might have seen — a possibility that I knew Margaret had no wakened consciousness of. Could it be that he scrupled with her, for her sake, or the sake of the world's too ready observation, while he had passed the question of scruple with himself as regarded her mother?

I was as quickly ingenious in apprehension as if it were I with whom there was need of care. I was dumb with it for a moment; I could not answer a word.

While I stood, hot and inwardly confused, — wondering, withal, if my own meddling words were not rebuked by his, — he began to speak again.

“I might talk with you, perhaps, if you would let me; and yet — perhaps it is better not,” he said; and we walked on slowly, not much heeding whither we went.

For my part, Rose, I never was quite so nearly in it, before. I think I was a fool. I think I might have said something, — have given him some leave. I might have said, — I wonder I did not blunder upon it, — as Mrs. Regis did, — “I am your friend; you may tell me anything.” But I had not got over the first surprise and scare.

“Perhaps you see that it is better not,” he resumed, quietly, misinterpreting my silence. “You are sure to see rightly.”

“No, indeed,” I said then, impetuously. “I do not see. I do not understand, at all. And — I cannot ask you questions. But — I thank you for believing in me; and — I am sure you may.” It did not occur to me till afterward, that, connected with what he had just said, my speech might sound very like an assertion of infallibility. But he was too intent upon his own real meaning, as I was upon mine, for any quibbling.

“Even selfishly,” he said, “I should wait. One cannot afford to lose all. Beside the wrong that it might be, there is all else; the difference, — the strangeness that it might seem to her, — no; time and right may come together, but any way, Mrs. Regis — and her daughter — must remain my friends. I am afraid I have told you too much, Miss Patience; but your own words led me, and I think everybody turns to you.”

I wonder what he thought he had told me! Is that the way they do? How does anybody ever understand?

We had wandered down very near the house again. Mrs. Regis came out, around the corner, against the wind. I dropped my hand from General Rushleigh's arm, and he went to meet her.

After I had just said “good morning,” I took myself away to Emery Ann. Edith and Margaret had got together.

The other two walked out along the brow of the mountain.

The cold, clear dazzle of the sun struck into my eyes. Emery

Ann had an open sunshade. I suppose I put my hand out and deliberately took it from hers, as I might have picked it up if it had been lying upon the ground. I had n't the least idea of what I did or saw for the next three minutes.

When I began to come to, I found myself staring at the scalloped edges of the silk, as I held the parasol exactly between my face and all creation beside. Emery Ann stood by me, blinking.

"Did I take this away from you?" I asked her somnambulistically.

"Yes, you did," returned my friend and handmaid. "'T ain't any matter; only I desire to hope you ain't getting betwattled too! Or *three*, finally."

Emery Ann is not a bit nearsighted.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A FERN LEAF.

.
... We had five minutes to spare, in the pleasant wood-shade at the Rhigi foot.

Margaret, who always finds fourleaved clovers, and rare blossoms, and curious pebbles, and the oddest, tiniest, filmiest, ferns — had a handful when we walked down to the boat, that came steaming through the lovely strait between the “Nasen,” and puffed up to the little Vitznau landing.

General Rushleigh had walked on to the hotel, and the porters met us at the pier with our light luggage.

Down under the great ribs and folds and craggy upshoots of Pilatus, past the aisles of Stanstad and Küssnacht, we floated on the gold-green water that, out from the mountain shadows, grew verd-azure in the sun. Margaret sat by me, and laid her ferns and flowers between the leaves of her Baedeker.

General Rushleigh left Edith and Emery Ann and Mrs. Regis all together at the stern, just after we rounded the Meggenhorn, and came and fetched a camp-stool to the quarter guards where we were.

I retreated a little behind my sunshade, — my own parasol, “finally,” this time, — as he placed himself on Margaret’s other side, and began to look quietly over while she arranged the delicate fronds. She had nearly finished.

He waited till the very last was going in ; then he said, quite straightforwardly and simply : —

“Miss Margaret, will you give me that little Rhigi fern ?”

“Surely I will,” and she withdrew it from the book, and laid it into his hand.

He opened his own guide-book to the panorama of the Rhigi-Kulm, placed the fern within its middle folding and then said : —

"I must beg for one thing more; a little pin, to make it fast."

Margaret took from her pocket a small pincushion, and held it for him. He found the cluster of least size among its neat assortings, and took one which he put through the doubled leaf so as to catch and hold firmly the stem within it.

"That is the keepsake of a wonderful place, and of all these pleasant, friendly days," he said. "It is better than to have gathered it myself."

Margaret spoke out with a wonderful sweet honesty, in answer.

"I am very glad you asked me for it," she said, "Because I think, now, I have not offended you in anything."

"Offended me! You, Miss Margaret!" said Paul Rushleigh, taken almost off his guard, though I feel sure he had allowed himself this little favor-asking just because of what I myself had put in his mind, and because he felt he had at least a right to do away that thought with her, if it existed. "You cannot possibly have thought so?"

"No. Not in the ordinary way, maybe. I did not think exactly that. I did not see how I could have. But — I am glad you can say 'friendly' to me. That you haven't disliked me."

"Disliked you! I beg your pardon for repeating your words. But they surprise me so. Did ever anybody dislike you, Miss Margaret?"

"I would rather you said just 'No,'" she persisted, with her pure, earnest frankness. And then she added, simply, "for I had counted you for a friend."

"No! Indeed, no! If you thought that for a moment, I thank you very much for asking me. Count me for your friend. I shall remember that you said it. Such words keep. Perhaps — when life has settled some things for us both, — for all, — I may be able to remind you of them. Or — when it has settled all things; when the fogs have all drifted down."

What did he say "for all," for? And who were "all?"

I felt a great impulse to have a sudden indispensable errand to Emery Ann, or somebody in that group on and in the stern. But I sat still, for fear he should not, if I moved. For fear, also, otherwise, of making a *tête-à-tête* apparent to eyes that might not be quite gratified.

Margaret made no further answer. What her face said, — so luminous-clear always, — I could guess. There was no danger that it should say, or he interpret, anything that her most modest dignity could be sorry for. There was nothing below that dignity that could rise through it to betray itself.

There began to be a bustle of gathering up wraps and traps. Somebody's satchel was between our chairs; we rose to let the owner take it. Passengers moved about, and took their stands for disembarking; our own party drew together; in ten minutes more we were at the pretty Hotel Rhigi, where we had chosen to seek rooms rather than at the great, elegant, showy Schweizerhof, where we had sat for an hour on the Saturday afternoon, and seen the pomp of the table d'hôte, and the dresses that trailed out to it through the spacious anteroom where we had waited.

I think General Rushleigh had business at his banker's and letters to write. We saw little of him, any more, until he came to say the mere good-bye.

"I do not say it for very long," said Mrs. Regis, with her hand in his. "I feel sure you will find us again in Italy."

There was a renewed pressure of her hand, for reply, before he let it go. But he made no other answer.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE HEM OF A STORM.

.
I RESOLVED that I would say something to Mrs. Regis of what I thought I discerned in the matter of General Rushleigh's friendship. I would do it if the evident opportunity came, but I would not make an opportunity, or force it in any way. I would take no thought about it beforehand, beyond this, — that I quite made up my mind it would be right to speak, upon occasion.

The occasion did not come while we remained in Lucerne. The most that I was able to do during the four days that we waited, — partly to receive our letters, for which we had telegraphed to Geneva, where was now our banking address, and partly for absolutely necessary repose, — was to walk out the little distance to the Lake shore with Emery Ann, and sit upon the pier, watching the tints and shadows upon huge, manifold Pilatus, and the light upon the distant, snowy Engelbergs.

Mrs. Regis and Margaret drove and walked about continually, taking Edith usually with them. They were very busy about carvings, having large boxes of new purchases packed here, as they had done at Rosenlauri, to be shipped home to New York.

Once more we sailed up the lovely green water, deeper into its enchanted recesses ; tracing, now, every bend and inlet to its farthest point, — passing down the narrow southern stretch called the Lake of Uri, which opens beyond Rhigi, through the close little aperture of the Nasen, into the very heart of the cliffs, like a beautiful water-cavern.

Enormous precipices wall it in ; the clear blue ceils it over ; the dark-forested promontories reach their feet into it, and stand there, hiding its one part from another.

You go winding through its still and shadowy vaults, from

which, through the long gorges that open away from them, you sometimes see the white, distant heights ; these far glimpses only emphasizing the wonderful, vague impression of threading an illimitable mystery, — a wild, dreamlike, world-separate grandeur.

You pass another Chapel of Tell ; a little frescoed building standing among the thick trees at a huge mountain-foot ; put there, they say, in memory of the patriot, on the very spot where he sprang out of Gessler's boat, in the storm, and made his escape into the wild passes of the hills to watch for his revenge.

At the very end, under the last, really closing cliffs, lies Flüelen.

We had telegraphed for carriages here, to take us through to Lugano. We found them ready, and immediately upon landing we set off up the long defiles of the valley of the Reuss toward Andermatt and Hospenthal and the Pass of the St. Gotthard.

We had given up Zermatt. The changeable weather, — the sudden falls of rain, — showed that the season was breaking. It was too exhausting and hazardous a journey for a party of ladies to undertake in the face of so much uncertainty as to its satisfying result ; Emery Ann declared to me, privately, after I had said in general council that I felt it impossible, that she was “ really wappered out with mountains ; but she presumed she should have kept on and said nothing if I had ; only if she *did* come to a sudden conclusion in spite of herself, up on some Horn, or Gorn, or Grat, — she should not mind so much for her own part, but she was concerned to know what we would do with her *then* ! ”

We telegraphed to Brieg, to which point our small boxes left at St. Maurice were to have been forwarded, and ordered them sent on to us at Lugano ; also we wrote in like manner for our big trunks, to the Geneva bankers.

Two more days, and the Alps would be behind us forever.

We had lovely morning weather, and a delightful drive as far as Amsteg, where we cracked through the narrow street to the small inn-entrance in the usual noisy voiture fashion, dined dearly, and saw an enormous quartz crystal, as big — as a four-quart bucket.

Mrs. Regis asked me to ride with her in the afternoon, from Amsteg to Hospenthal; sending Margaret to sit with Edith.

And this was my opportunity, and a clear bidding.

She wanted to talk with me about our plans in Italy; our stay at Lugano, especially, which she was inclined to make a settling down of several weeks.

I was only too anxious for pause and quiet, after all that I had been doing and receiving. We were going over this Alp-boundary into another — and altogether different — world of wonders. I could not rush straight from mountains and glaciers to cathedrals and picture-galleries. Between Switzerland and Italy, — as some think between this life and our next to come, — there needs, and is, an intermediate state, in this very reposeful Elysium of the Swiss-Italian lakes.

I was quite ready to acquiesce in Mrs. Regis's suggestions, though I felt pretty sure that with her there was also an inner argument, which when it occurred to me, I could not disavow even in my own mind.

General Rushleigh would undoubtedly come down into Italy by the St. Gotthard Pass. Of course there were Como and Maggiore, as well as Lugano; but, if we still remained at the latter, — my thought sprang hither and thither, seized this and that together, and made divine possibilities out of them.

The lovely, still October, in that delicious land of summer fragrance; of flower-flush and fruit-ripening, — of the fig and the grape and the nectarine, the oleander and the orange bloom, and the laurel, — of cloudless skies, and tender shades, and dreamy waters, — of day-long idleness, and nights of music, — I grew silly and romantic, Rose, thinking of what it might be to these younger lives; of what it might be laid out to be.

For, — another thing — among all the letters that had come to our whole party at Lucerne, there had not been any from either Harry or Flora Mackenzie to Margaret Regis. Something might be coming of it which should free her. Free her to the knowledge of that to which she would not open her eyes. Or, — for I, looking down upon this thing in the light in which it lay to me, could not feel, even as I ought, perhaps, that there was anything in that false half-bond to stand for a moment

against the rush of a living truth when it should come, — the truth itself demanding search and trial and acknowledgment of all things, should descend into her life and set her free, by very faith, deeper than mere wordkeeping.

Yet I trembled to touch with a finger of influence the straws of circumstance. Jackstraws of human fate one cannot play with. I was sure all this occurred to me beside and after the other plentiful and almost imperative reasons.

When, after a good deal of previous talk, General Rushleigh's name was spoken by Mrs. Regis with a quiet friendly frankness, and she remarked that she should be glad if it happened that he joined our party again, — it was so much nicer, altogether, to say nothing of cordial liking, to have a gentleman to refer to, — I did suggest that it was "different, however, his attaching himself to us here, at hotels and in cities, from joining escort among the Alps; that people would imagine, perhaps, and observe; there were always conclusions drawn; did she think he would be likely — unless, as indeed she had perhaps also noticed" —

It was easy enough to interrupt me. I stumbled a good deal. But her — "Noticed what, Miss Strong?" was quick and sharp for the elegant Mrs. Regis. It brought me to the bravery of plain truth, which I had resolved to speak.

Let her take it as she might, — let it affect her action as it might, — I was sure it was in the clear and honest order. For the two opposing interpretations of things which had come to me, were making me, to myself, in the daily confidence and presumed understanding with all, as if I were double-minded.

"I have noticed," I said with quiet directness, "his manner with Margaret. I think, if there were nothing in the way, he would — not leave it to be merely noticed."

"Margaret! That child! Miss Strong, you are utterly mistaken. I have had them with me continually. I assure you, you are altogether in the wrong."

"I thought you ought to know it, Mrs. Regis," I went on, just as if she had not spoken her emphatic contradiction. "I mean, I thought I ought to tell you how I saw it. For it might rest, very much, even unconsciously, with you. You have been anxious about Margaret. I think she is under a mistake, which

she will live beyond. I am not afraid for her, for she is waiting ; she is taking one true step at a time. It will be put right for her. But *my* true step was to tell it to you. There will be some right thing for you to be careful for. You yourself will be able to see what it is. I believe no one ever misses a real good who does not personally — or for whom some other does not — fall into a wrong, or fail of a right, for which, and its consequences, they are responsible. That is why this living of ours is such an accountable — and yet such a child-dependent — thing. It seems to me — and I feel as if I could trust the insight, even if there were nothing else — that a great good and happiness waits now between Margaret and General Rushleigh. And I think — I am sure — that he is, at this moment, under some partial mistake.”

“General Rushleigh is in intimate friendship with myself, Miss Strong.” She repeated my name as people do, when their attitude is over against, not with you ; so that your objective personality is prominent to them, and they feel it well to make it obvious to yourself. “I think I have opportunities for understanding *him* very thoroughly, however it may be as to Margaret. And it would, at any rate, be such a preposterous thing ! A man of his age, and gravity, and a girl like her. She is unfit for him. She could give him nothing but a girl’s fancy.”

Mrs. Regis did not know, I think, the faint breath of emphasis she gave the pronoun. “How could she value him, even ? Three months ago, she was mad for Harry Mackenzie !”

I answered the first part of her objection.

“What can the spring give but its blossoms ?” said I. “Sweetness, and freshness, and a blossoming wisdom, are what a man looks for, if he is ever so wise ; the wiser, the more, maybe. A woman of his own age would be old as he is not. You would not have him marry a woman of forty ?”

If I had not believed in Mrs. Regis, more than she yet knew how to believe in herself, I should not have spoken so, or have entered into this conversation at all. If I had been a woman in a story-book, having to do with the stereotyped selfish manœuvrer of it, I should never have put the whole thing in her hands in such way. But I do not think we are set in this world

to live such story books as wrong and unwise people are forever making. I do not think our human business is to outwit and circumvent each other. I believe in *introverting*; in making straight for the truest, livingest part of people; the part that God lays hold of.

We are to overcome evil with good. *Our* good? No, pharisee! The good that lies there under the evil; ready to be touched and worked upon. Yet our *evil* cannot reach it, certainly.

Mrs. Regis might contradict me now; I expected it; but she could not contradict that which would continue to say itself.

I did not say boldly what I did about a woman of forty, for the sake of any sharp home-thrust. I did not mean insolence. I did not pre-suppose anything to be insolent about. I put myself right beside her, in her own attitude of friendship for General Rushleigh, and spoke what she might see. I spoke it fearlessly without hint; for I hate hinting. I set in a clear light, as well as I could, what it was a great deal best should be apparent to her, and that she should be reminded was apparent to the world.

This was what she answered me.

"A woman of forty, — or of fifty," — she left her own age in the chasm she leaped defiantly, — "can have sweetness and freshness, — if life gives her a chance."

She almost pleaded. She forgot altogether, the confession that might be in her words. She was making her stand for heart-youth and hope that will not perish, against the inexorable years. Do you suppose I could not feel with her? Do you suppose the great possible fulfillment is so buried under my own almost half century of denial, that I could not? But I said to her what I would say to my own self.

"Not *those* chances. Her sweetness is for the second summer time. Let her lay it up before the Lord. It would not be seemly, I think, to give it to a young man. It would turn to something different. And she would rob some Margaret, with all her years before her. That is what I believe about it."

A look, different from what I had ever seen before in Mrs. Regis's face, came over it as I spoke. I think she felt a sudden

clear recognition, inward and outward, of obstacle and incongruity. There was a stab in her heart, and a wall against her way. And one plain stone in that wall had just been laid there. There was one woman in the world beside herself, — there was I, Patience Strong, — who would see all the wrong and the unfitness if she ever crossed that barrier now.

With that sudden expression, there passed also the first look of age that I had ever detected in her, across her features.

She leaned back in the carriage, — a motion that was as if ending the conversation, — and sat perfectly silent, with her face turned away toward the mountains. The mist was falling down upon them. The hem of a storm swept their tops.

I could not tell whether she was offended with me and meant to show it, or whether the strong grasp of her own thoughts drew her away into a solitude in which she utterly forgot me. Whatever it might be, I could but sit silent also.

Much must have possessed her during those many moments in which neither of us moved. The key to her conclusion, — whatever the train or conflict that led to it, — appeared in her first following words.

"I return, Miss Strong, to my first convictions. I think still that you are utterly mistaken. I have reason to think so which I do not feel called upon to explain to you now. But I agree with you in one thing. I think General Rushleigh left us under a slight mistake. That has occurred to me before. It will be my business to see that it is rectified. I shall write to him from Lugano. If he comes back to us, things shall be made plain."

She spoke from a vantage. She uttered a measured oracle, of which in her own reserved consciousness she seemed to hold the clew. I should see by and by. She did not feel called upon to speak fully to me now. I was put back into my outside place. She just gave me something to remember when things should have turned out. I could see that she resumed — or resolved to resume — her own position; and that some solution which gave a test into her hands had presented or renewed itself to her mind in regard to that which had already perplexed her. This occurred to me from what she said next.

"General Rushleigh is not a very rich man, perhaps you

know? His father's estate cannot be wholly settled in the lifetime of his mother, and the share he is to receive meanwhile depends upon the uncertain and gradual sale of some extensive, but complicated, real property."

She told me that too, as if she gave me something to think of, another half to which might be somewhere, and might yet come round to me.

I took it as she gave it to me, and put it by. I have, as Emery Ann expressed it of somebody we both know who has *not*, — a belaying pin in my head.

I had no idea it meant that he could not afford to marry; that even supposing he could take Margaret with her step-mother's consent, and her marriage portion, he would not be able, yet, to place and take care of her as she had been placed and cared for hitherto; that, in short according to the vulgar phrase and vulgar reasons, he was "not a marrying man." Still less, — at any rate quite as little, — did I do Mrs. Regis the coarse injustice of understanding her words as a threat of again withholding arbitrarily her approval, and cutting Margaret off with at best only her "little twenty-five thousand dollars."

No. There was some other inference from the fact she mentioned; something which might touch far differently General Rushleigh's motive, — such motive as a man like him could have, — and withhold him from action that he otherwise might take. It substituted another explanation for his silence and departure, than his knowledge, — or half knowledge, — of Margaret's previous obligations. It might not have to do with Margaret at all; it did not point her way.

Did it point toward Mrs. Regis herself?

Perhaps it would be just as well to add, right here, — instead of my own conjectures at the moment, — that which did come round afterward, and fit on.

A few days later, Mrs. Regis began, quite on the other side of the subject, to talk to me one morning about Margaret. Just as if no newer suggestion had arisen between us concerning her, she returned of her own accord to the Harry Mackenzie affair. She spoke of there having been no letters recently received; of the off-and-on character of the intimacy, held from the beginning

in a sort of tether that might be drawn or let slip, at convenience.

"I should think far better of him if he were more self-compromising and bold. If he insisted on a declared engagement. I know it would have been Margaret's natural course, — if it had been asked of her. But there was too much dependent on my pleasure — beyond the five years, even. — Besides," — and she laughed slightly, — "there was another contingency, though not precisely as I fancy they reckon it" —

"I am sure Margaret does not reckon!" I broke in.

"I do not mean Margaret. I mean those Mackenzies. There was another contingency," — she resumed, administering to me a slight, courteous rebuke for my interruption by returning to the precise phraseology of her sentence that had been broken off, — "which would have made Margaret at once and altogether independent of me. If I had married."

I did not interrupt again, although she stopped. I did not even challenge, by word or smile, her past tense. I went on listening. When a person to whom you speak does that, you can hardly escape awkwardness but by continuing.

"Colonel Regis was far more generous than many men. He did not take everything back from me if I should not remain a widow. The life interest of all continues to me, though I should marry. But it becomes *only* a life-interest, and it negatives my control."

She had got round, through her conditional phrases, into a very indicative present.

"I know very well what many people have supposed and said about it. There were sure to be plenty of versions, in New York gossip, of a complicated will whose record was in Kentucky. But I have been very indifferent to their surmises; in fact, they have simply protected me. I had no thought of marrying again."

She went on with more about the Mackenzies watching for this among other contingencies of the suspended approval; of their excessively civil and deferent way toward herself in it all; of their tacit allowance that her judgment was right, — that an engagement should not be talked of until Harry himself was in

a position, — and so forth ; — but I could not help thinking, — Did all this matter at the present moment, or was it mere cover and introduction ; — a little game, like “Burying Cities?” Had she just put in now, some second syllable, of which the preceding had been hidden in that rather detached sentence the other day about General Rushleigh?

Did she give me the two links, at separate times, on purpose? Did she leave me to put together what she would not argue, outright, to me?

Was this the mistaken supposition under which General Rushleigh had been acting? Did he believe that marrying would make her a poor woman, he being a “not very rich man?”

I did not feel a particle of disdain or censure in my weighing of Mrs. Regis's words. I was not lying in wait to cavil inwardly at her. Because I thought I could see farther than to do that. I could see that she had drawn, in good faith, however anxiously, this possible conclusion. I could see that she gave me her own premises by which I in turn might arrive at it, and that she trusted to my candor to allow her title to fair play.

I could not wonder that she would fain prove this first. If it was in her afterward to stand aside, to clear other mistakes, to give over to Margaret that which indeed never was hers to give, but might be to hinder, — I could hardly expect more. I could hardly expect that for the scruple of “robbing some other with all her years before her,” she should refuse the springtime which came blossoming back with a wonderful richness to her own mid-life. I did not expect it of her. Perhaps I had been severe in what I had said to her about it. And yet, — I think it would have been so much higher and purer, — I would have struggled hard in her place to expect it of myself.

I was very far, too, from rigorous judgment of one who so evidently, across all her pride and my plain dealing, desired to put herself in some right light with me. Not because of the me ; I did not lay it to that separate account. I laid it to the account of her own higher apprehension, to which I had dared to speak, and before which she was restless ; not before me, who only stood for it and with it, making it objective to her.

That is the secret of much confidence. We are but lay figures, very often, when we fancy we are of high individual importance. What one human being takes pains to explain, or argue, or confess to another, is often only what he wants to make his own more inward self discern, acknowledge, or forgive. That is why the dusk, or the darkness, falling between two faces, makes heart-speech the easier.

And that reminds me that I have skipped to some days later. It reminds me, also, that I may have to oblige you to skip some things, Rose, in my story; or, if I send some pages of it which I write out now, in their due order, for my own deep interest in it as it grows, I must send them to you with some precaution against their getting astray; with certain blanks and changes, — and perhaps piecemeal, even; a leaf here and there, among mere travel sketches, which will make a pretty little puzzle and excitement for you to put together. For books do get misbound sometimes, and there is a certain pleasure in coming to a “fault,” when one knows how to look for the “lead” again. After it all does get to you, it is far safer than between any journal or portfolio covers, with any Bramah or combination lock.

The dusk of the shortening day and the down-rolling storm fell between our faces that afternoon upon the mountain passes.

We had crossed and recrossed the foaming Reuss. We were following the great ravine, now on this side, now on that, the cliffs along whose fronts our roadway crept ascending toward the savage defiles of the Schöllenu, the Devil's Bridge, and the Oberalp.

Night and fog came down upon us. We had to make up our minds to miss the wonder and the awe of the imposing scenery; to feel it only in the blindness of tempest and the near solid gloom of vast, uprearing rocks; in the mingled roar of winds above and waters plunging deep below; in the imagination that at any time, or all the time, “*this* might be the Devil's Bridge.”

Our voituriers closed, as well as they could, the flapping canvases, and the ill-latching doors. I had to put a shawl-strap through the handle on my side, and buckling it into a loop, sit with my arm through it for three mortal hours, to keep the door

from flying back. The lanterns were lighted, and in their small radius of illumination we could see the dripping faces of the precipices, or trace the brinks that fell away, we dared not fancy' whither.

It was easy enough, in our present practical interests and anxieties, to leave behind the dropped subject of our difference. I fancy Mrs. Regis never quarrels; and I quite believe, moreover, that she does not wish to quarrel with me. As the dusk and the rain dropped around us, and we were shut in close together, the silence that had been between us for a while was broken, first by fragmentary remark, and afterward by connected talk again.

Mrs. Regis herself led it in a direction of thought and feeling to which she has not ordinarily seemed given, and that of itself showed me very plainly how some new awakening touch had made her own life newly living to her, bringing things from backward and forward to the sharp focus of present revelation. We had left personalities; but our words drifted close about them in the impersonal and abstract.

"We are going through all this," she said, "that we shall never go through but this once; and we are not seeing it. It is a blank in our journey, that we can ill afford any blank in. It is like those years, Miss Patience, that you are so stern about people never living again."

Her calling me "Miss Patience" was a marked relenting from the stiff "Miss Strong." It was always her friendliest little way with me, when her mood was intimate. Before I answered the rest of what she said, I answered that, with the real, cordial responsiveness that I felt.

"Thank you for the Christian name of me," I said, laughing. "It makes me feel in a more Christian light with you. I am afraid you find me a fierce old thing, sometimes."

"You are both ends of your name," she said. "I find you 'Patience,' and I find you 'Strong.' That is why I cannot help liking you, and also being half afraid of you. You are awfully uncompromising."

"About the years? I don't say we should never live them again. I only say that the things which are dead, are dead to

ourselves. But in everything, as in finally laying off the body, I believe we only die that we may live again. In other lives; and in our own lives — farther on."

"Why should we not wish to, — why should we not do it if we could, — come back and go this way again, that we are missing now? Farther on, — if it means quite other things, that we might have had also, — is a hard promise."

" 'A thousand years shall pass, and then
I mean to go that way again.' "

I quoted it to myself rather than to her. I do not think she knew what I quoted from.

"Farther on grows out of now; even out of the missing. If we miss that, I think we shall be sorrier," I said to her. "The foolish virgins went *back* after their oil. There is something in that part of the parable that gets overlooked. Maybe if they had gone straight to the Bridegroom, with their empty vessels, he would have had pity on them. Maybe He Himself would have found them oil."

"There is something else in that parable, if you are going to look at it freely. The Bridegroom himself *tarried*. And the women slept, and the lamps went out. Life is only just so long; you forget you are waiting it out sometimes.

"I don't think He forgets," I said, gently. "He only *tarries* when we need the time."

"Yet you think He may hold out something you are not to take, — for your real own. I never gave *keep-money* to children!"

"Give-money is better," I answered; hardly sure that she would apply the word as I could not help applying it. "Or He may show us something that He is keeping for us; something He is going to turn into what we could never turn it to ourselves."

"We are getting very deep into metaphor," said Mrs. Regis. "I am not sure I don't like plain speaking quite as well in its season."

And there we dropped the talk again. I have not told you all of it; only the points that held. I am not one of those wonderful scribes who can reproduce yards of colloquy, with all the tones and gestures, stops and quotation-marks.

We had not only not quarreled ; we had come nearer to each other than we ever did before. But for that, I suppose she would scarcely have given me the other syllable I told you of.

It was nine o'clock when we saw the lights of Andermatt twinkling, close-clustered below us.

We came rattling down into the village streets, and rattled through. We plunged again into the gloom and storm beyond, leaving its pleasant glimmer dropping out in distance and shadow, — for our rest was farther on.

Nearly two miles more, — a weary lengthening, — and we came to Hospenthal, at the foot of the St. Gotthard.

We slept there, in a string of rooms that opened to each other from end to end. Around the walls of mine were all Napoleon's battles, in cheap pictures.

The next morning flashed gloriously upon the world ; at least, our piece of it.

We looked in our maps and guide-books, and made out just where and when we had passed the Devil's Bridge.

It would have been a great thing to have seen it. But, as Emery Ann said, — "There's no knowing how many devil's bridges you get over in the dark. And not a bad way either, when you come to think of it."

CHAPTER XXXV.

DOWN INTO THE SUMMER.

.
THE zigzag carriage road doubles up the northern side of the mountain, gradually leaving the village below, and giving pretty, shifting, receding views of it and its valley, and of the picturesque old castle-ruin on its separate height which the Lombards built to overlook the pass.

Around the end of the long-lying ridge, the way takes a last turn that puts the whole body of the range between us and the Urserenthal, or valley of the Uri and Andermatt, that we and the tempest were driving blindly through last night; and out on the southeastern slope we begin to follow a longitudinal stretch which lifts us continually higher and higher toward the central culmination of the extended chain of the St. Gotthard, and above the lonely, lovely valley of the upper Reuss.

Down at our left, — a desolate basin, yet green with soft pasture and shut warmly in by its great defenses of bleak, bare rock, — it spreads its breadth beneath us, and in its midst the slender river runs to meet its mate. At our right is the impenetrable mass along whose shelvy side we creep. Forward, above the rocky heaps, a southward sky glows cloudlessly; a bare, bright heaven above a bare and solitary earth.

"It will make beautiful weather now," said Margaret to the "cocher," as he walked with his long whip and reins in hand by the side of the carriage.

"It makes always beautiful weather in Italy," replied the man.

Yes; over there was Italy!

Behind, the uncertain days and the breaking weather in storm-breeding Switzerland; before, weeks of summer splendor

yet, in the delicious Ticino. Between the two, the unmelted snows around the level little lakes on the topmost table of the mountain. In a few hours, we should have passed over ; a day's drive only between two zones, across an arctic culm.

So far below us was the river-valley, that we did not even notice for a long while, that any living creature moved in it.

The still, feeding sheep might have been small gray-white stones lying scattered about in it.

But we were suddenly aware of a tiny scud and hurry among the little gray-white things.

They were turned, by some magic, into a moving multitude that ran like mice or insects, gathering in converging lines toward a thickening centre swarm ; those in the far outskirts catching the impulse gradually, and raying in.

It was an immense flock in an immense pasture ; it took a long time for the last ones to find out that there was anything going on. It took us a good while to detect where were the last, and what was drawing them all.

It was the shepherd, standing on a rock, calling them to be fed with salt.

We could not hear him call. We could just see him there, and the eager huddling round him ; and we could see how not his voice or presence was made to be directly perceived by all, but one caught from another the sign and knowledge, and so at last all were gathered.

All but a very distant, stolid few.

And then we discerned another thing. A little black speck flew wildly about the far places, the distant margins. Hither and thither, round and about, scaring the stragglers ; driving them up till they got where they could be drawn ; hunting them out, and bringing them in. We supposed it barked fiercely ; we could see when it must be barking ; but we could not hear it.

There were to be none left out, away off, without their share, deaf, witless, or obstinate. The fullness of the little gentiles was to be gathered in.

"Behold My Parable !" A voice and a beckoning were in all the grand, wide scene, and said it to me.

And in the parable I saw two things, newly.

That the sheep-nature is a part of the shepherding. That they are made like that, one to follow another, so that the nearest, hearing and seeing — and following, bring also those who cannot yet hear and see.

And that for the scattered in the wilderness, the dog shall be sent out.

Now the dog of the shepherd never harms the sheep; but only compels them to the fold or to the feeding.

We came up under the full noon sunshine, to the high solitude of the uppermost crowns; to the little lakes that lay close under the sky; to the snowheaps beneath the northerly ridges.

We got out and walked, and took snow in our hands, and made snowballs; and said, — “To-morrow, down there, we shall eat fresh figs, and find the flowers in bloom.” And then, as the road trended to its first decline over the mighty brow, we got into the carriages again, to be driven down into the summer.

•

Be patient with my last grand zigzag! For I wish you could see, or imagine by means of me, this wonderful road!

Other mountain ways climb sharply, with quick angles; this lies in grand sweeps, looping and curving like a ribbon unrolled and cast with great flings, this way and that, down the vast descent. You come upon skein after skein of it. You thread the beautiful ins and outs that lie beneath you for one little way; and then, below some precipice-front that hid it and which now you pass, you see new coils of it tossed to and fro, and almost interlacing. Everywhere it is broad and smooth like the finest city avenue. Not a rolling stone, not a roughened rut, throughout.

The horses, — we had three to each carriage, — took a regular, steady trot, and kept it without break or acceleration. Just the same rounding sweep at every turn the leader made, — his hoofs striking a sure rhythm, the loosened traces swaying at his sides, as we measured down the many thousand feet of distance. Almost seven thousand it is in actual fall to the sea-level; and who knows how it doubles or quadruples in the reflex windings?

Past old snow masses, — in deep clefts where the warm sun never reaches; beside streams tumbling through ice-arches; through a profound ravine, — the dark Val Tremola, — down whose awful sides, they say, fall frequent avalanches, — you keep on, and come out again upon the broad, sunny mountain-bosom, to more dropped skeins of white, smooth roadway; more delicious swings as in mid-air, to and fro, down the declivity, with sweet fields of Swiss-Italy sending up summer breaths to meet you; you swoop, as the bird swoops, with a last, glad slant and rush to the valley; and then — you drive suddenly, as into a close house-passage, where you could touch the walls on either side, through the narrow, little chief-and-only street of Airolo, and find yourself before a funny Italian posta, where you climb with cramped limbs the outside stairway that completes the confusion of indoors and open air, make your way into a crowded little travelers'-room, and, with such faith as you may, order dinner.

We were on the south side of the Alps.

The great north wall of Italy, under which she lies most lovely, was behind our backs and above our heads, with its massive shelter.

Ticino, full of sunshine, fragrant with vintage, — the quiet lakes, — the lesser hills swelling in soft beauty, — long, lingering bloom and warmth, — *rest*, — were around us and close by. Down on the Lombardy plains, — through the valley of the Arno, — the mountain winds might sweep, and make a winter chill in every shadow; from the crests of these huge ramparts, they rush at a larger angle, to smite below; but they would leave us in the garnered warmth from noon to noon, with the tender little southerly breezes stealing back in a sweet under-current upon us.

We threw off cloaks and shawls. We sat already in our open carriages in summer dress. We left Airolo, and followed the river down, by the beautiful cliff-road; now skirting it for a long way on one side, then crossing by some bridge, from which we could see up and down the wild, rocky path of it into still turns and shadows where the crags projected and forced it

into bays, — or where it made white leaps and plunges over its descending bed; we passed through tunneled galleries cut through straight profiles of rock, whose entrances were hung with swinging vines, and whose exits were blue beyond with a clear arch of sky; we were among innumerable little waterfalls again; they shone out with tiny gleams, or made here and there a far, foaming spring from their green hiding places, hurrying down to find the river.

We came in a little while, unexpectedly, — for we had begun to feel as if we must have left all such grand surprise behind us, — into a gorge of magnificent gloom. The road descended into a low ravine, and ran off upon bare, shelving rock at the base of a black, beetling wall on one hand, and on the other along the very water-margin that washed the naked slope with its thin, swift edge.

Close beyond the brown transparency was the deep central chasm, river-filled; and above came down the plunging cataracts, where the flood was hemmed and tossed among the ribs and gullies. It was a steep, sudden, cliff-locked incline that the water followed; and we — for there was no other pathway — must come close and follow with it. It was as if the river took us by the hand and led us through by its own secret passage. We did not see how it was till we had descended the sharp pitch beneath the overhanging brows, and our wheels had left the gravel for the smooth-worn bed of stone, and we found ourselves in the cool and the dimness beside the black-deep, roaring-white, tumultuous water.

We counted seven — or nine — separate cataracts, flood above flood, in the upper throat of the gap, when we looked back from the first little bridge, flung across the stream where it begins to twist itself through the crooked breaks and crannies of the long mountain fissure. We crossed three times, and at last rounded away into the more open valley under an impending mass of rock which reaches its threat out over the road for a distance of some fifty yards.

Before we got to Faido, — where we passed the night at the Prince of Wales Hotel, in which the British heir-apparent and his party stopped when he was traveling here, and where Edith

and I slept in a room resplendent with yellow cushions and hangings, which was a part, maybe, of the royal suite, — we saw the fall of the Piumegna, where the little tributary flings itself in one shining leap into the Ticino; and when we threw open a back window of our room to look out into the woody pleasantness behind the inn, which has the whole village huddled around the little square at its front, we saw the soft radiance of the sunset falling upon its forest background and upon its shimmering waters.

Next day we dined at Bellinzona.

Our morning ride was still along the lovely glens, between mountain slopes that were bright with waterfalls, — over valley-spaces rich and sweet with vines and chestnut-trees, and where the figs were ripening: through tiny villages, which we entered and left as by a back door and a front at either end of the funny little corridor-streets that begin all of a sudden with their close-packed lines of houses, and end just as suddenly without the least gradual straggle; and we entered with great delight the first real Italian court-yard, around which Hotel Angelo is built, with galleried stories, labyrinthine passages, out-of-door crossings, ups and downs from room to room; dined in a cool, shady saloon, and set off, refreshed, for our last half day's travel for many weeks.

From the town we went up a mountain again. A beautiful height, groved with chestnut, from whose ascending bends we caught the first charming vision of the lake country.

Maggiore glittered in the distance, — the pretty Ticino ended its long run in its bosom, — Bellinzona itself, with its fortifications, its three castles, its picturesque roofing and coloring, lay at our feet; and oh, how delicious was the summer air over the wood-herbage and among the nut-trees!

We got away among billowy, foresty hills, and wound among them all the afternoon. The country reminds me strongly of the woods and heights of Hilslowe, when we drive around Blue Peak in the twilight.

We stopped at a secluded Osteria, to give the horses water, and we saw there the first "sandal-shoon" on the bare feet of

peasant girls. Stiff, wooden soles, high-heeled, with only a strap across the toe to hold them on; and they go clip, clip, in a most uncomfortable manner, as the foot bends the little it can upon them, its only chance for play being the slipshod *let-go* behind.

And at last we descended the long gradual height we had gained, to the dear little middle lake of Italy's border three, — Lugano.

We came down under a miracle of soft splendor, — a sunset that was all over the sky, in this fashion; — deep saffron and blazing crimson, in the west; eastward, over the tops of the dark hills, pure rose, through which the blue showed; above, curling clouds that shaped themselves into a marvelous shell, inverted over the whole landscape; its edges richly brown with shadow as they curved away from the horizon light, — its inward coloring melting through all delicious shades of citron and amber and buff to a pale, clear gold in the mid-heaven. It held itself above us, and made the foliage about us tender in its own mellow light. It hung, and hung, and glowed intenser, and behind its border the flame-tint and red burned on, ever more fervently. It broke, at last, and wandered and dropped away toward the hills on every side, in flecks of gold and tawny upon the rose and blue.

Was this the way the suns of common days went down in Italy?

But we have been in Italy many weeks; and we have seen many sunsets; yet never again have we been beneath a twilight sky like that.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGIOLI.

.
 THE road ran in between high villa walls as we drove rapidly down into Lugano.

Gardens and frescoed houses gave a quaintly pleasant aspect to the lofty outskirts of the town, overlooking the smooth lake.

This fresco painting of outer walls seems odd enough at first; but after a while, like other human fancies and inventions, it turns its thought-side toward you, and you come to it, in a way, and partly.

Balconies, verandas, porches, pillars, are represented on the flat surfaces in which the real buildings end. You say, "What a senseless sham!" And then you turn it over in your mind, and you see that it is like ever so many things that can't be quite all they would, in this world, and so have to make it up with imagination. And imagination, presented to other people so as to solicit theirs, is — effect, make-believe, sham, or what you please. Perhaps there may be a kind of honest sham that is n't a very bad thing.

For instance; a man builds a house, not only to live in, but to express himself. And not that altogether to other people, for what they may think of it, but to realize it to himself. To put into positive form his notion of pleasantness, beauty, use, — in living and surrounding. To behold it with his eyes, and see the good of it. Now he can get just so much stone and timber to do it with, and just so many days' work from other men to put them together; and there his house must end. His idea does n't. He can *think* ever so much more. If he were in heaven, perhaps he could just think it all out into form. In the mean time — here in Italy, — he puts it on in color; which says, —

"This is the rest of it. This is what I would have made it if I could."

I wonder if the inward building that we are each at work on, and that we never in this beginning of things do finish to our minds, could be shown out as it stands in us, there would not be seen to be a great deal of beautiful fresco about it, upon very blunt endings? And if the manners, and the decencies, and the lovely courtesies of life do not outstrip with their graciousness the heavenly charities that are actually edified into permanent spiritual substance in our natures? And yet, if these color-touches may not stand for honest, beautiful desire, that would be all that, and that will be as fast as it can? Won't it do to look pleasanter than we feel, — to welcome a bit more cordially, — when the inmost feeling of all is something so much pleasanter and more cordial than we can make the minute's mood? Won't it do to wear such refinement and culture as we can, until we have got more? To put it on the top, while we are studying and practicing as we can, to deepen it all the way down? I don't know but I could have a certain patience with shoddy, even, if I thought it was shoddy that really wanted and meant to *be*.

Shakespeare says, — "Assume a virtue if you have it not;" you may be more likely to get it than if you altogether gave it up and let it go. And I have read a sermon upon "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ." The putting on is from something certainly that must have been put in, and that lies there truer than all hindrance, though it may not yet have got put through. And the sweet dream-frescoes, that finish out our short-stopped, disappointed living? Don't they shine upon the blank with bright, clear color to the angels who go by? So that they say, as I said when I passed a flat-walled cottage with a little painted porch, — "It is a sign; some time it should be builded?"

Still, I felt a kind of hitch, or slip, somewhere, in the practical part, as if the theory would n't quite do to hang life on to. I put it to Emery Ann.

"Forzino," she said at first, slowly. "But then again, I *don't* know. Appears to me as if that was the wind-up. I don't believe they'll ever put the real thing on, top of all that paint.

I'd as lief see a timber left somewhere, with a mortice or something. 'T ain't the way we do down East."

"Down *where*, Emery Ann?"

"Well — where *are* we? Out West, then. In Poggawantimoc. We get up a frame, and board in; then we finish off as fast as we can, specially inside. And if a man has a notion of a new part added on any time, he'll leave a rough end, or a chimney built out, or put up a lean-to, and it'll *look* like it, and be real as far as it goes. No; I don't like too much polishin' off till you're pretty near through."

And I guess the truth about it is partly with me, but a good deal with Emery Ann.

"I'll tell you what," she said again in a minute or two. "It's the difference between a paper pattern and a paper trimmin'. It's a good thing to have your idea laid out, complete, to go by, in your own measurin' and makin'; but you've got to have it in the stuff, before it'll do to put it right on an' wear it. And another thing, Patience; we may as well thank the goodness and the grace that that dodge *has n't* got to our folks yet. They'd run *all* to fresker. They alwers do. Folks would be settin' up housekeepin' on nothin' *but* fresker. Fact, they do now, finally."

We clattered into the town, that looked so pretty, so warm-colored and picturesque, from above; its roofs fretted to richness with old, dark-red, roughened tiles; its steep streets running up to the Cathedral height behind; its curious quays and water-stairs, and little boats, and slopes of stone terrace for the washerwomen, marking the Lake-edge.

We crossed the public square, and plunged through the dimness and unsavoriness of a narrow, arcaded street where the people sat, and stood, and chatted, and bargained, in the very drive-way; — paved with two stripes of flag it was for wheels to run on; — and it seemed as if we were driving right through a long bazaar, between its counters, and scattering all its trade. I felt a good deal like a "bull in a china-shop."

We turned in at a dark archway, to a solemn, cloistered courtyard, under the shadow of an old church tower. It was the an-

cient monastery of Santa Maria degli Angioli; disestablished, and become the modern Hotel du Parc.

The first thing Edith did was to get lost.

They had carried her traveling bag off with Margaret's, and she left me at our room door to follow hastily. The Regis's rooms were up another flight.

I waited two or three minutes, and then went in and partly closed my door. I thought she had got talking with Margaret, and would come back presently.

But presently,—she did not come. And Margaret herself came down,—she has a wonderful organ of locality, and places herself at once in whatever rambling complication of interior, which is a fine thing in European traveling; and also, which is another fine thing, she also notes the numbers, and so checks herself and the whole party at the very outset;—and then we both got uneasy; for Edith had left her, she said, as soon as she had found her satchel.

“If she *has* taken a wrong turn!—There are no end of passages and staircases,” said Margaret. “She might walk about an hour. It is a bewitchingly mysterious old place.”

“But *this* is n't bewitching,” I said, uncomfortably; peering up and down from our corner door along the immense corridor in one direction, and a perfect labyrinth of narrow, odd-shaped galleries in the other, where iron railings ran round a sort of sarcophagus-shaped opening in floor above floor, and door-ways beyond revealed fresh intricacies, and a farther sarcophagus in the dimness. “It is among some of these doubles that she has got puzzled. We came up along there; I am sure I cannot tell how.”

“We must go and look for her,” said Margaret.

“And get lost ourselves?”

“No, I shall remember, and any servant could tell us the way to our number. But we must call Emery Ann. Edith might come back herself and get frightened for you. We can't spare time for *very* much hide and seek. I was to go down with you and send up tea to mamma.”

So, leaving Emery Ann watching in the door-way, we set off upon our voyage of discovery.

If she had not stood there, — as Emery Ann always does stand at her post, whatever it is, — I doubt, with all Margaret's topographical instinct, if we should have got back without a servant. Whatever the old monks did with this end of their great convent, and whatever these sarcophagus-shaped galleries were built so for, with all the little by-ways and corner-ways leading off from them, — they make, with their solid stone floors and gloomy iron railings, that fend them from a sepulchral abyss between foundation and skylight, the very queerest kind of trap for newly-lodged travelers.

We traversed at least three different stories, blundering upon the staircases, and blundering back into the mazes — as they seemed to us, — in which no staircases appeared, and from which we wondered how we had happened upon any before. Each story was like every other, and the numbers, — connected with the rest of the large building in a way we could not “articulate,” — did not give us much certainty. We saw no servant, even; for it was the hour of table d'hôte, and they were all off at the other side of the quadrangle, in the big dining-room, or in their little pantries, which we discovered afterward, from which they served the diners in their own rooms. I think the service was just about over and we were in the long lull of the dessert.

But at the third time of our coming upon the beacon vision of Emery Ann at the far end under the lamp, she beckoned to us furiously, and we hastened back.

She said she had beckoned before and we had not minded. Edith had been back some minutes.

As we found our way, — by her help, now, severely experienced as she was, poor child, — to the *salle à manger*, she told us about it.

“I got upon the wrong floor, somehow,” she said. “I believe I went up instead of down; and then I went down and up, and then I got among those dreadful little passages and could n't find the staircase at all. I believe I wandered off into some unheard of quarter; and once I opened a door that I thought I had just come through, and went straight into somebody's bedroom, — only somebody was n't there, for all the world is gone to dinner. Once or twice I saw a servant, and he would look at

me curiously, and I felt so ashamed of belonging nowhere, that I walked as fast as possible to make believe I did. After that, nobody seemed stirring. So I got desperate, and stood by the railing, — for I remembered that one of them was in sight from our door, though which, or which way, I had lost all idea, — and made up my mind to ask the first person who did come along the way to the bureau."

"That was bright," said Margaret.

"You see, I got really frightened enough to stand still and collect myself. Well, there I waited; till by and by — I dare say it was n't many minutes, but they seemed half hours, — somebody came in from a turn — the *inside* corridor, you see, where the staircases run, — and walked my way. I looked round, and spoke all in an instant, for fear he should be gone. 'Will you have the goodness to direct me to the bureau?' I said; and then — I saw that it was n't a servant. He was very polite, and he answered me in English; and he went back with me to show me."

"Edie! A strange gentleman!"

"Oh, he was n't exactly a gentleman. I mean — he was n't old, you know. I mean," — and she laughed, and set us all laughing, — "he was what Norah would call 'jist afther bein' a boy.' And he was American too. He said so."

"Was!" said Emery Ann. "He *is* — if anything. And he'll continyer to be!"

Emery Ann is very skittish for Edith. She sets her dear old heart upon her very much.

"Well?" I asked inquiringly; for it was n't worth while to lay great emphasis on that, after all.

By this time we had reached the *salle à manger*, and went in. Edith answered me after we had seated ourselves, and given our brief orders.

"That was almost all; only when we got to the bureau, and I gave your name to the clerk, and asked' him to look for the number, and send somebody to show me the way, he had n't the name at all! He had just sent around to several rooms for names of new arrivals; there had been a good many this evening, and things were n't settled. 'We'll take all the new numbers, and go round to them all,' said Mr. —."

"My gracious!" said Emery Ann. Edith stopped, astonished.

"Well, we did n't," she said simply. "Because the man came back; and you had signed, Emery Ann; and it was Number 90. And the clerk himself went up to show me, and Mr. Holabird went as far as he was going before" —

"And told you his name?" Emery Ann took the anxiety all off my hands.

"The clerk called him so. At least," she said, imitating the broken English funnily, — "he called him Meester Holy-beard. And he explained to me. You know he would n't like to be remembered by such a name as that. And I am sure I should never have forgotten it."

I saw unutterable things in Emery Ann's face, and I pulled her gown under the table. What was the use in uttering? That is exactly what makes the awkwardness.

The next morning, out in the garden, the youth lifted his hat to Edith, walking with me. At night again, he was opposite to us at dinner, and we fell into some little conversation over table civilities, as American travelers do. In the drawing-room, afterward, he begged leave to make himself properly known to me. He knew we were Strongs, of Boston. He is of Massachusetts, also; a son of one of the Holabirds of Z——; Mr. Stephen Holabird; and that is his name too. I had heard of the Holabirds; they are old manufacturers there; a nice family. And this young Stephen is a nice fellow, too. I won't be sure of men — most men — after thirty. But I *can* tell a fresh, good, bright fellow of eighteen.

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